

Notification Plan for Invasive Phragmites Control in Rondeau Provincial Park

Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone

July 31, 2019



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1.0 Introduction

This pesticide use notification plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Pesticides Act.

The aim of this plan is to meet the park user's general right to know about pesticide applications made to outdoor public places that are owned or controlled by Ontario Parks. The plan allows park users to take action to avoid potential contact with pesticides, if they wish. Ontario Parks ensures that pesticides are applied to public places in a safe, responsible manner, minimizing harm to the community and the environment.

This plan sets out how Ontario Parks will notify members of the public of pesticide applications made for the purpose of controlling Phragmites in aquatic areas at Rondeau Provincial Park between September 2nd and October 31, 2019.

The plan describes:

- What public places are covered by the plan;
- Who regularly uses Rondeau and an estimate of the level of use during the prescribed treatment period;
- How and when Ontario Parks will provide park users and other stakeholders with information about the pesticide application (i.e. what notification arrangements will be used);
- How park users and other stakeholders can access this plan and get more information about the Ontario Parks' notification arrangements; and
- Contact details for anyone wishing to discuss this plan or the overall project with Ontario Parks.

This plan is informed by Ontario Parks' pesticide use policy. Policy PM 2.16 states that pesticides will be used for public health and safety measures or for preservation of natural values. Ontario Parks must both consider non-pesticide measures (mechanical or otherwise) and minimize the use of pesticides within provincial parks, whenever possible. This undertaking is part of a larger Integrated Pest Management approach; Ontario Parks intends to follow chemical control of Phragmites with rolling and prescribed burning, as per the guidance within Ontario's Invasive Phragmites Best

Management Practices (available online at <https://www.ontario.ca/document/invasive-phragmites-best-management-practices>).

Ontario Parks will be using an herbicide with glyphosate as the active ingredient for chemical control. All application will occur within the regulated park boundary. All of the pesticide application will be done using ground application. The ground application will be completed by using a variety of specially-adapted equipment and people on foot with backpack sprayers. Further information on implementation of this project can be obtained by contacting Brad Connor, Rondeau Provincial Park Superintendent, at 519-674-1760 or brad.connor@ontario.ca, or by visiting the Friends of Rondeau website at <http://rondeauprovincialpark.ca>.

2.0 Background

Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) has been described as Canada's worst invasive plant. It is a perennial grass that has expanded to dominate coastal wetlands in Ontario and contributed to the decline of wetlands and the important services they provide. Studies conducted in Ontario and the United States clearly show that the most effective control methods include a combination of herbicide application and mechanical control, including cutting, rolling and prescribed burning; mechanical control alone is not effective and can exacerbate the problem.

To address this challenge, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has submitted applications for Emergency Use Registrations to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which has been approved annually from 2016-2019. The Emergency Use Registration includes both aerial and ground application of an herbicide to control Phragmites in shoreline and wetland areas at Rondeau Provincial Park and the Long Point area, as a pilot project.

The requests for an Emergency Use Registration are based on the observed exponential growth of Phragmites in the coastal marshes at Rondeau and Long Point. Additionally, Phragmites is contributing to the decline of at least 25% of Ontario's species at risk. Local biologists and scientists advised that the health of these coastal marshes is at a critical ecological tipping point. If immediate action is not taken, the provincial, national and global significant natural heritage values (e.g., species at risk) for which Rondeau and Long Point are recognized will be permanently lost.

3.0 Notification Scope

3.1 Places Covered by this Plan

This plan specifically covers Rondeau Provincial Park. For notification information related to activities associated with the Phragmites control pilot project occurring in Long Point, please refer to the Long Point notification plan.

Work related to the 2019 pilot project for control of Phragmites at Rondeau Provincial Park will be occurring within the regulated park boundary (see Figures 1 and 2). Decision-making related to areas for ground treatment is based on a combination of weather conditions and water levels, and will be made in the days immediately prior to treatment.

This plan will also provide information on how notice will be provided to park users and other stakeholders in the interiors of park buildings (e.g., park office, Visitor Centre). This plan will also provide information on other safety-associated agencies that will be notified prior to initiation of the project in case of health and safety or environmental emergency.

Proposed Ground Treatment Sites



Figure 1: A map of Rondeau Provincial Park depicting proposed ground herbicide treatment sites for 2019



Figure 2: Map of notification locations for signs, barriers, and staff members during treatment.

3.2 Stakeholder and User Group Summary

Ontario Parks' identification of stakeholder groups and their estimated level of use is summarized in the following paragraphs:

Campers

Located north of the treatment areas, the Rondeau campground remains open for camping through August through October each season. The park has average mid-week visitation of 25 – 50 campsites occupied during this time. All campers will be provided with written and verbal information regarding the project upon arrival and registration at the park. During implementation of the project, some beach access points and hiking trails will be temporarily closed to public access for 24 hours. It is anticipated the project will have little impact on campers and day users, other than closure of several of the trails during treatment. A small area of Phragmites will be treated within the campground area. Treatment will only occur when the campsites near the cell are unoccupied and will remain unoccupied for at least 24 hours after treatment.

Day Users

It is anticipated that the park will see an average of 10 daily vehicle passes sold for mid-weekdays at the end of August and into September. The park will see an average of 20 additional vehicles each day that will have a seasonal or annual vehicle pass. Information for day users will be available at the front entrance in signage, information letter, and verbally from park staff. The park will have most beach access areas available and most trails will remain available for use during the project.

Cottage Lease and Other Tenure Holders

Rondeau has 280 active cottage leaseholds in the park. It is estimated that approximately 20% of the cottagers will still be using their cottage during the mid-week timeframe of September. All lease holders will receive an information letter by early August outlining the project and who they can contact for additional information or questions. Ontario Parks anticipates little to no impact from the project on the leaseholders.

Park Staff

All park staff will be fully aware of the project; however, all questions and inquiries related to the project will be directed to the Park Superintendent. After Labour Day, the

number of park staff is approximately 15. The park will have sufficient staff available to assist with implementation of the project (e.g., staff will be positioned at closed areas during treatment).

Friends of Rondeau

The Friends of Rondeau is a volunteer organization that works to benefit the park in many ways. From fundraising efforts, special events, and the operation of the Friends' store in the park Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre is only open on weekends in the fall. This project is expected to have low to no impact on the Friends of Rondeau group or the Visitor Centre.

Boaters, Including the Rondeau Yacht Club

The Rondeau Yacht Club closes on August 25th, 2018 for the season. Information regarding the project shall be posted at the boat launch and the Yacht Club will receive notification as a leaseholder. Currently, powered boats are not permitted within the waters of "Long" and "Short" ponds, located within the regulated park boundary. Ontario Parks anticipates nil- to low impact to the Rondeau boaters as a result of implementation timing.

Waterfowl Hunters

Rondeau Bay Waterfowl Association operates the waterfowl program in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and Ontario Parks. Opening day for waterfowl season in 2019 is September 28. Early goose hunting dates also occur during the treatment period, between September 5th -15th. The Rondeau Bay Waterfowl Association does conduct some preparatory work leading up to opening day, but it normally falls on a weekend date. The Rondeau Bay Waterfowl Association is in full support of the Phragmites management projects within the park and Ontario Parks anticipates no concerns related to waterfowl hunters. Staff will coordinate with the waterfowl office to work in areas that aren't being hunted.

Indigenous Communities

Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, and Caldwell First Nation will be provided with notification of treatment through notification letters before treatment and ongoing communication about the project through email. An information session was held in the summer of 2019 to share

information about the 2018 project and plans for this year. All groups were in support of Phragmites management and had no concerns.

Other Agencies

Agencies such as the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Chatham-Kent Health Unit, fire department, Ontario Provincial Police and regional Chatham-Kent police services are regularly notified when Ontario Parks conducts operational projects. These agencies will be notified of the pilot project and communications protocols to ensure that they are aware and prepared to refer questions about the project from area residents. It is possible these agencies may receive calls from the public related to this project. It is anticipated that this project will have a low level of concern from these service groups.

Local hospitals (Chatham-Kent Health Alliance) will be provided with toxicological information about glyphosate prior to initiation of the project to ensure they are prepared to address health concerns of any potential patients believed to be impacted during ground treatment.

Ontario Parks will also provide advance notification to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, including specifically to the:

- Spills Action Centre;
- Windsor and London District offices; and
- Local Pesticide Specialists.

3.3. Notification Arrangements

This section of the plan describes how and when Ontario Parks will provide notice of pesticide use as part of the 2019 Phragmites control project at Rondeau Provincial Park. These notification arrangements are based on Ontario Parks' assessment of:

- The level of usage of the areas where pesticide may be used; and
- The extent to which activities generally undertaken in these areas could lead to some direct contact with pesticides (e.g. boat launches, hiking trails).

Notice of pesticide use will be provided by a combination of methods, the details of which are outlined immediately below.

Signage

Signs will be posted on or adjacent to barriers placed at all access points to the application area; see subsection 4.1 for the draft notification signage. Signs will also be posted at general information areas such as the main gatehouse (inside and outside the building), Visitor Centre, beach access points, and all trail heads (e.g. South Point Trail) accessing the application area. Additionally, signs will be posted at the waterfowl office and every 100 metres along the beach where treatment is to occur. Ground application signs will be posted at least 48 hours prior to application and will remain for at least 48 hours after application. Signs will be of a standardized design that will be easily recognizable to both park users and park staff.

Letters

Letters will be mailed or hand delivered to cottage leaseholders and other tenure-holders within the park (e.g., churches, Rondeau Yacht Club), campers, day users, Friends of Rondeau staff, Rondeau Provincial Park staff, local First Nations communities, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, the Chatham-Kent Health Unit, Chatham-Kent police and fire departments, and the Ontario Provincial Police; see subsection 4.2 for the draft notification letter. Letters will be distributed so that they are received a minimum of five days prior to initiation of the project.

Email

Ontario Parks may use email as a means of notification if specific stakeholders express interest in receiving digital notice or for greater ease in contacting specific park staff or staff within the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, the Chatham-Kent Health Unit, Chatham-Kent police and fire departments, or the Ontario Provincial Police.

Door Knocking

The Park will hand deliver a notice with detailed information and date of the project to all leaseholders currently in the park. This will ensure the quickest information transfer to cottage and other tenure holders. In the occurrence where a cottage leaseholder is not home at the time of notice delivery but known to be in the park at the time of application, the notice will be taped to the front door. This notice delivery is in addition to the notification letter that will be mailed to the leaseholder five days prior to initiation of the project.

Phone Contact

Where requests for additional information are received, or other means of contact are not possible, phone contact will be undertaken by Rondeau Provincial Park staff, to ensure all stakeholder groups identified above have been notified.

Verbal Information Relay

Ontario Parks' staff will relay project information verbally to all persons entering the park immediately prior to or during ground herbicide treatment, in addition to providing a copy of the notification letter and associated mapping. Gate staff are already in place to achieve this level of notification.

Where trails or other access points into the treatment area must be closed to foot traffic, park staff will be placed strategically to ensure any unauthorized access is prevented and information on the project can be relayed verbally.

Ontario Parks' staff and the contractor will work with the waterfowl office coordinate treatment in areas near duck blinds to occur when those blinds are not in use.

Website

The ministry will be posting regular updates related to proposed treatment dates within the identified treatment window, as well as copies of the implementation and monitoring plans on the Friends of Rondeau website.

3.4 Information to be provided

Pesticide use notices will include all the following information:

- The full product name of the pesticide to be used;
- The purpose of the use, clearly setting out what pest will be treated;
- The range of dates within which the pesticide use will occur and, if possible, the proposed date of ground treatment;
- A map depicting the area the pesticide will be applied to;
- Contact information, including phone number and email address for an Ontario Parks contact person whom people can contact to discuss the notice;
- Contact information, including phone number, for the local Pesticide Specialist, whom people can contact to discuss the notice; and

- Any warnings regarding re-entry to or use of the place of application specified on the product label.

How will park users be informed of this plan?

Ontario Parks will advise park staff, park users and other stakeholders of this plan and its contents by:

- Making a copy of the plan available for public viewing free of charge in the Rondeau Provincial Park Visitor Centre and the main office, during office hours;
- Placing a copy of the plan on the Friends of Rondeau website at <http://rondeauprovincialpark.ca>
- Including reference to the plan within communications materials being sent out as part of this plan.

Rondeau Provincial Park Contact

Anyone wishing to contact Ontario Parks to discuss the notification plan or to obtain details of the 2019 Phragmites Control Project at Rondeau Provincial Park should contact:

Brad Connor, Rondeau Provincial Park Superintendent

Phone: 519-674-1760

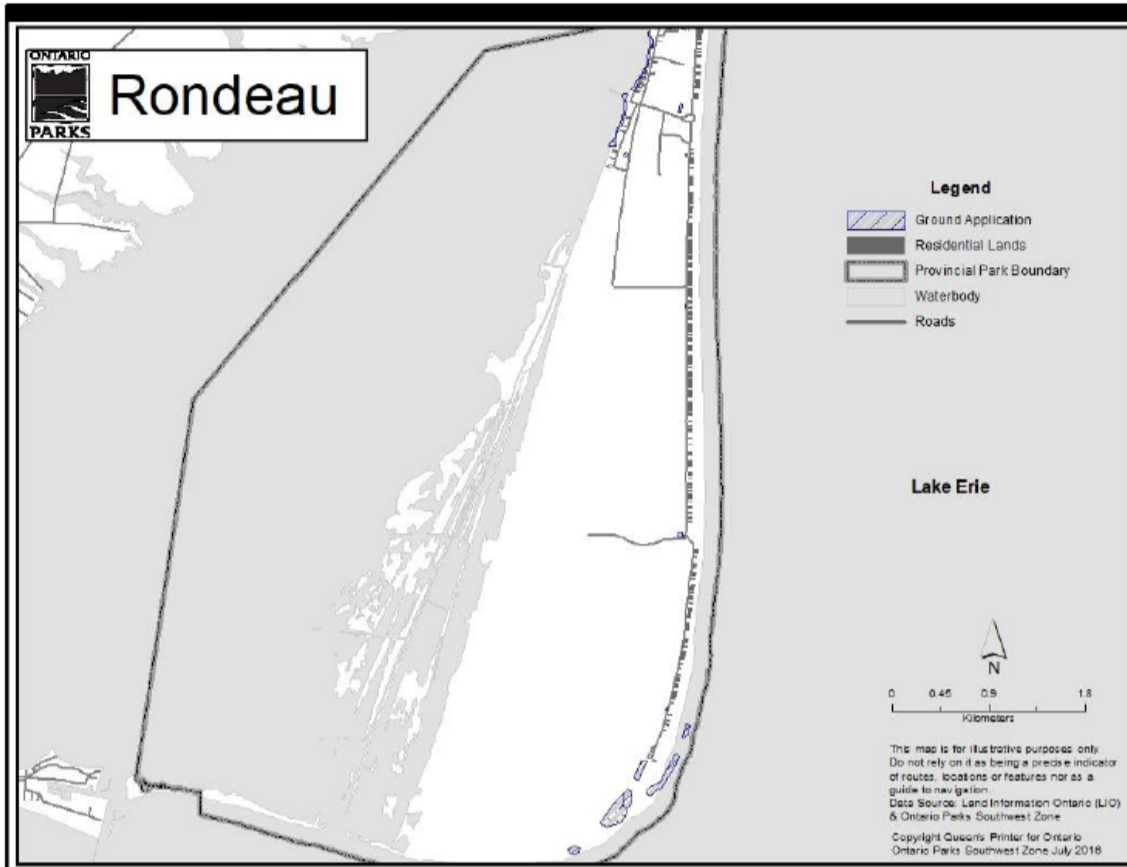
Fax: 519-674-1755

Email: brad.connor@ontario.ca

4.0 Notification Materials

4.1 Notification Signage (draft)

Rondeau Provincial Park Phragmites Control



NOTICE: An aquatic herbicide application for control of Phragmites is planned for September - October 2019, in Rondeau Provincial Park.

Ontario Parks will directly notify park users before the herbicide is applied.

Application period: September 1 – October 31, 2018

For updates visit <http://rondeauprovincialpark.ca>

Herbicide: Roundup Custom® (glyphosate) (Reg. no. 32356)

Please refrain from fishing or waterfowl hunting in treatment areas for 24 hours following herbicide application.

For more information about the aquatic herbicide application, visit the park Visitor Centre or Park office

Or contact:

Brad Connor, Rondeau Provincial Park Superintendent
519-674-1760 or brad.connor@ontario.ca

or

Pesticide Specialist, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks
519-873-5000

Figure 3: A draft sign for ground Phragmites treatment in Rondeau, which includes a map showing ground treatment sites, the project start date September 1, 2018 and the herbicide; glyphosate-based herbicide Roundup Custom for Aquatic and Terrestrial Use™ (Registry number 32356).

4.2 Notification Letter (draft)

August 2019

Dear Park Visitors, Campers and Leaseholders;

This letter is to inform you that Ontario Parks will be applying Roundup Custom for Aquatic and Terrestrial Use (active ingredient: glyphosate) within the regulated park boundary as part of an ongoing effort to control the invasive grass *Phragmites australis* (also known as 'Phragmites'). Herbicide application will be completed under appropriate weather conditions between September 1 and October 31, 2019. As this timing window approaches, Ontario Parks will ensure regular updates on proposed treatment dates are available at the Park office and the Visitor Centre, as well as on the Friends of Rondeau website at <http://rondeauprovincialpark.ca>.

This undertaking is part of an Ontario Parks pilot project using ground herbicide application techniques to control *Phragmites* growing within wet areas. While not approved for general use in Ontario, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has approved an Emergency Use Registration of Roundup Custom™ for this pilot project. Rondeau Provincial Park will be using Roundup Custom to treat up to 10 hectares of marsh and shoreline currently dominated by *Phragmites*. Ground application will be conducted by using a variety of equipment, mounted on utility vehicles or boats, and backpack sprayers.

To ensure public safety, certain areas of the park, including some roads and trails, will be closed during treatment and for a period of time post-treatment. Signage will be posted at all access points to the treatment area, including the Park office and the Visitor Centre at least 48 hours prior to application.

Enclosed with this letter is a project map, which provides additional information on locations of barriers and signage, as well as delineation ground treatment areas.

Ontario Parks intends to work as per guidance within Ontario's "Invasive *Phragmites* Best Management Practices", which includes following chemical treatment with rolling and burning (available online at: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/invasive-phragmites-best-management-practices>). Provided weather conditions are conducive, Ontario Parks will partner with the ministry's Aviation Forest Fire and Emergency Services Branch to conduct a prescribed burn of the treated areas. Prescribed burning of treated *Phragmites* has shown to help increase the recovery of native marsh flora. Fire eliminates the dead plant material and seed heads, preventing them from overwhelming the surrounding aquatic and terrestrial landscape. The prescribed burn is likely to occur between November 1 and March 31.

For additional information on this letter, the project notification plan, or general project information, please contact Brad Connor, Rondeau Provincial Park Superintendent, at 519-674-1760 or brad.connor@ontario.ca.

Should you have concerns that cannot be resolved through discussion with the Park Superintendent, you may contact the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP), at 519-873-5000 to speak with a Pesticide Specialist.

Should you wish to report a spill or overspray incident or issue during application, you may contact the MECP's Spills Action Centre (SAC) at 1-800-268-6060.

Upon completion of the Phragmites treatment and prescribed burn processes, we urge you to take time and observe the recovery of the sites and the regrowth that takes place. We also encourage you to take advantage of the numerous programs offered at the Visitor Centre through the Natural Heritage and Education Program, specifically on prescribed burns and their benefits to the park.

Sincerely,

Brad Connor
Park Superintendent
Rondeau Provincial Park