



**LMAC Motion to Town of Columbia (TOC) Board of Selectmen (BOS) to
Eliminate *Phragmites Australis* on or Near Columbia Lake Lakebed
October 4, 2017**

BACKGROUND: *Phragmites australis* has been found on the lakebed of Columbia Lake in four areas and near the lake in two other areas. (See attached photo.) *Phragmites australis* is an aggressive invasive grass reed that has taken over thousands of acres of wetlands in Connecticut as well across the United States. Within the last 40 to 60 years, the plant has been spreading at rates as high as one to three percent per year in areas like the lower Connecticut River. It is estimated that this invasive reed now dominates over 10% of the State's tidal wetlands.

Phragmites australis creates tall, dense stands which degrade wetlands by crowding out native plants and animals, blocking shoreline views, reducing access for swimming, fishing, and hunting and creating potential fire hazards from dry plant material. Due to the rapid nature of *Phragmites australis*' growth LMAC asked our limnologist consultant, Dr. Robert Kortmann, to survey, assess and provide recommendations. LMAC also partnered with the Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) sharing our initial research, Dr. Kortmann's findings and seeking their input as to how to best move forward to eliminate this invasive species. The IWWC agrees with LMAC that we need to eliminate *Phragmites australis* found on or near the lake.

Dr. Kortmann's conclusions were that while the *Phragmites australis* was at a 'no nuisance' stage relative to habitat degradation, lake access or use, etc., there was a clear "nuisance condition" in the high potential to spread and become more dense in other areas. Dr. Kortmann advocated treatment now to remove the *Phragmites australis* as even in this initial 'nuisance phase' minimizing growth and reducing the *Phragmites australis* could take a period of years. His recommendations to cut and remove, treat with approved herbicides and cover the cutback areas to prevent photosynthesis are standard practices utilized by federal, regional and state agencies.

LMAC APPROVED MOTION: Due to the aggressive growth of *Phragmites australis* which poses a threat to the natural beauty, recreational use and economic value generated by Columbia Lake, LMAC advises and requests that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) accept Dr. Kortmann's Report and have the Town follow his recommendations with one variation, which is to defer possible use of herbicide pending further study as outlined below.

1. TREATMENT PROTOCOL

- A. **Mid-November to Mid-December 2017 (after the lake drawdown):** In the four lakebed areas, the town cut, bag and remove as much of the *Phragmites australis* above and as much under the ground as possible. In addition IWWC approved that property owners can cut back the two fields on wetlands near the lake.
- B. **Mid-November to Mid-December 2017 (after the lake drawdown):** After cutting and removing, place PVC hemp tarps on the four lakebed areas as barriers to prevent photosynthesis. The tarps are to remain through the Spring of 2018 or 2019. The cover timeline depends on further research to determine if at a later date a recommendation is made to proceed with herbicide treatment approved for *Phragmites australis* as recommended by Dr. Kortmann.

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LMAC APPROVED MOTION: (continued)

- 2. INFORMATION GATHERING & RESEARCH** ~ Simultaneous with implementing the above Treatment Protocol, the BOS directs LMAC with the Town Administrator to continue information gathering and thorough research in general accord with Dr. Kortmann's and IWWC's recommendations regarding the use of a herbicide approved for *Phragmites australis* and the practical ramifications of using it at Columbia Lake. The research shall include addressing questions regarding the efficacy and timing of possible herbicide treatment for *Phragmites australis*, understanding the risks and rewards of herbicide use, identifying permit requirements and investigating qualified applicators. Research is to be completed by the end of January 2018 so that treatment potential for Spring 2018 can be considered and acted upon if merited.
- 3. PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS ON PRIVATE LAND** ~ The IWWC approved that the affected property owners could cut back the two fields with *Phragmites australis* on wetlands near the lake. The Town shall take a proactive role in notifying these landowners of the problem, seeking their cooperation in this treatment program and coordinating treatment of the lake areas with the landowners' treatment of their lands so as to most effectively combat this invasion of *Phragmites australis*.

Approximate Locations of Phragmites Stands: Six Locations

6. Lower Woodland Terrace ~ on lakebed 3 houses down from Woodland Terrace Association common dock

5. Camp Asto Wamah on Lily Pad Cove ~ in front of Hungerford House infringing on bed of cat tails ~ can access on right of way after 54 Erdoni Road;

4. Small stand on wetlands across street from Erdoni Rd Beach

3. Lake Road ~ facing the lake on lakebed to left of Fochi property are Phragmites stands; right of way access next to 80 Lake Road

1 & 2. Lake Road ~ Fochi Property ~ Phragmites is on lakebed and large field next to lakebed ~ right of way access next to 80 Lake Road



Commanding Officer
Lieutenant Medina

State of Connecticut



Connecticut State Police Troop K - Colchester



Executive Officer
Master Sergeant Kittle

Date:

Ms. Carmen Vance
Columbia First Selectman
323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway
Columbia, CT 06237

RECEIVED OCT 11 2017

Dear Ms. Carmen Vance

This correspondence is an effort to keep you apprised of the monthly police services occurring within the Town of Columbia.

During the month of September 2017 the Columbia Resident Trooper as well as Troop K Troopers responded to 324 Calls for Service in the Town of Columbia. Of these Calls for Service the most notable are:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Accidents: | <u>6</u> |
| Burglaries: | <u>1</u> |
| Larcenies: | <u>0</u> |
| Other Criminal: | <u>2</u> |
| Other Non-Criminal: | <u>6</u> |
| Non Reportable Matters: | <u>196</u> |
| Other Noteworthy Events (List): | |

In addition to the above investigations Troopers conducted the following motor vehicle enforcement:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| On-Sight DWI: | <u>2</u> |
| Traffic Citations: | <u>88</u> |
| Written Warnings: | <u>35</u> |

Sincerely,


Lieutenant Medina

COMMANDING OFFICER
Troop "K" Colchester, CT

15A Old Hartford Road
Colchester, Connecticut 06415
Phone (860) 537-7500
FAX (860) 537-7550



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237
(860) 228-0110 FAX: (860) 228-1952

Walter Crosby
3 Hennequin Road
Columbia, Ct. 06237

October 5, 2017

Dear Mr. Crosby;

After much consideration to your concerns and others in attendance at the Tree Hearing on October 2, at Town Hall, concerning the removal of one Sugar Maple at the Town Beach, I have concluded the following:

In the best interest of the town and its residents and this project of Beach Renovation, I believe the Sugar Maple tree in question should be removed. Given its current location and condition within the construction Zone for the handicap walkway, I see no compelling reason to justify re-engineering the design, thereby adding unnecessary expenses to residents for those materials and labor associated to make that accommodation for this particular tree. In addition, as stated by the Public Works Director, George Murphy, a smaller more appropriate tree species is being considered for planting at the beach area during renovations.

Therefore, In accordance with Connecticut State Statutes 23-59 you may appeal this decision to Tolland County Superior Court within ten (10) days from receipt of this letter

Thank you for your participation in the Tree Hearing and your interest in Columbia's municipal trees.

Cordially,

Andrew Andrews
Tree Warden
Columbia, CT. 06237

Cc: Columbia B.O.S

Town Administrator, Mark Walter