

May 17, 2011

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL IN YORK TOWNSHIP

York Township will be conducting an ongoing project this summer to control an invasive plant called Purple Loosestrife. This invasive plant is migrating into the township from the north and east adjacent townships. It is only sighted in the northeast section of the township primarily along roadside ditches and small creeks. Currently there are only a small number of infested areas with just several plants noted in most target sites. Left unchecked this environmentally destructive plant will work its way into the township interior wetlands and ultimately to the Saline River corridor where it could cause irreparable damage to the ecosystem of that aquatic environment.

Purple Loosestrife is a flowering plant which grows 3-5 feet tall with small pinkish purple flowers tightly clustered on a spire. These are generally found in wet areas. The invasive plant loves to follow small water courses and can drop as many as 2.5 million seeds per year, which are carried along in drains to wetlands and streams choking off beneficial vegetative and stifling animal wildlife by ruining their habitat.

The York Township Environmental Committee worked with Parks and Recreation Chairman Frank Stukenborg to create a plan employing two methods of recognized control; mechanical and chemical. For the most part the preferred control method is mechanical whereby the plants will be pulled or dug out before seed formation, and a beneficial grass will be sown in the ground disturbance. Chemical control using water based mix containing an approved herbicide RODEO will be used in the few area too large to pull or dig. The herbicide will either be spot sprayed or daubed on individual plant foliage or a cut stalk. The RODEO herbicide applicator will be Frank Stukenborg who is certified by the Michigan Department of Agriculture to handle and apply the herbicide. It is a mildly toxic mix formulated for approved use in wetlands and near waterways.

Property owners in York Township who have the plant growing in their yards near the roadside ditches are currently being asked to give their permission for the plant to be removed either by pull and dig, early in the summer or sprayed later in the summer if necessary due to growth of new clusters. Control monitoring of all township roads will require at least several years of effort to stop the spread. Long term monitoring will follow to prevent its reoccurrence.

Cooperation and support have come from the Michigan DNR, DEQ, Michigan State University Extension Office, the Washtenaw County of the Water Resources Commission, and the Townships of York and Pittsfield. The project is also being followed with interest by the Saline River Greenway Alliance.

Property owners in York Township who may have the weed growing elsewhere in their yard are asked to pull it out or request the control team to remove it for them. This team will be comprised of volunteers from the Tri-County Sportsmen's League who are committed to conservation projects. For further information, email project chairman, Frank Stukenborg at fxstuken@aol.com or call the York Township Office at 439-8842.

Prepared by:

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