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Grant will help
Shelby battle
invasive reeds

— 3A

State grant to help fight invasive plants

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SHELBY TOWNSHIP — The Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program recently awarded a two-year, approximately \$254,000 grant to the Lake St. Clair Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area.

Shelby Township is among roughly 25 local, county, state and federal governmental agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, in the CISMA working to control invasive plant species to protect wetlands, woodlands, uplands and the St. Clair River delta.

The main invasive species threatening Shelby Township is *Phragmites australis*. *Phragmites*, or the common reed, is a large perennial grass that can grow

See PHRAGMITES on page 6A



Photo by Donna Dalziel

Phragmites australis, an invasive species also known as the common reed, grows near the detention pond at Gene Shepherd Park in Shelby Township.

Phragmites

from page 3A

to up to 20 feet tall in dense stands.

The aggressive, non-native plant chokes out native vegetation and hurts waterfowl populations. Along roadways, it causes sight obstructions for motorists and prevents roadside ditches from functioning properly.

“Phragmites is spreading throughout Shelby Township and is now pervasive along our trails and in township parks,” Shelby Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said. “All members (of the Lake St. Clair Cisma) contribute to a plan of attack to eradicate these invaders and restore the natural beauty of our township and community.”

Shelby Township is deemed

a Lake St. Clair Cisma “focused management area,” so it will receive funds for herbicidal treatments and assistance with mapping areas in need through a partnership with Oakland University.

The strategy is to monitor, map and/or treat more than 950 acres across several focused management areas to keep those areas clear of invasive species, build community awareness of solutions and then move out to other areas.

Township Engineer Shannon Filarecki, who sits on the Lake St. Clair Cisma’s steering committee, said the Cisma requested more money than it was awarded. At press time, she said the steering committee planned to meet to discuss how to distribute the funds and make up the shortfall.

Filarecki said there are multi-

ple ways and combinations of ways to treat Phragmites depending on the location. She said it takes at least three years of herbicide treatment to see major results.

“The township has already been treating Phragmites at the former Soccer City and the detention pond in Gene Shepherd Park,” she said.

Shelby Township Parks, Recreation and Maintenance Department Director Joe Youngblood said Shelby Township has more than 1,300 acres of developed parkland.

“Unfortunately, some of that is being threatened by these invasive plants, so it is exciting to know we are getting some aid in this fight,” Youngblood said.

The Lake St. Clair Cisma is one of 19 projects in Michigan

that recently received a total of \$3.6 million through the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program, a cooperative effort of the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Quality, and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

“Invasive species pose significant risk to Michigan’s world-class natural resources, and funding from this program is vital to our continued fight against these invaders,” DNR Director Bill Moritz said in a statement. “(Our partners’) hard work will go a long way toward protecting our natural resources, as well as the many recreational and economic opportunities tied to Michigan’s woods and waters.”

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