

***The Marion Lake Story: Defeating the Mighty Phragmite*** (DVD, 28 minutes; Jezebel Productions, 2013; <http://www.jezebel.org>)

*The Marion Lake Story* follows several years of a community's efforts to get rid of an invader. *Phragmites australis*, a common reed of American wetlands, had overtaken Marion Lake on Long Island, New York. The highly invasive plant had grown very dense, sometimes reaching heights of nearly 4 m. Over 30 years, this species gradually formed a monoculture around the lake, choking the lakeshore and threatening to eliminate its rich ecological diversity.

Lori Luscher, a resident of the lake area and president of the committee to save the lake, wrote a grant request to the Department of Environmental Conservation to eradicate the nuisance reed. People in the community were skeptical and had lots of questions, but they established a goal to get

rid of the phragmite and fill the wetlands around the lake with native vegetation so that wildlife would return to the ecosystem. The path toward rehabilitation posed various challenges, and progress occurred slowly. Undiscouraged, the community persisted with their work – performed by volunteers and hired workers – as well as offered additional financial support. By the sixth year, much of the native flora had returned and a great diversity of wildlife followed.

This story is an inspirational one. The film depicts how one woman rallied a reluctant community to solve a major environmental problem. Viewers will not see actors or talking heads. The people featured in the program are the actual members of the community discussing the problem and doing the work. This is a superb example of the way a group of committed people working together can change the status quo. The video would be appropriate for use in a high

school or college environmental science class, especially a course with a service-learning component. It would also be a practical resource for extracurricular organizations focused on biology, ecology, and/or community service. Students might find themselves motivated to take an interest in restoring ecosystems and could get started by participating in the WAVES project featured on the film's website.

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