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The Marion Lake Story: Defeating the Mighty Phragmite

2013
Distributed by Jezebel Productions, PO Box 1348, New York, NY 10011
Produced by Greta Schiller for Jezebel Productions
Directed by Greta Schiller
DVD , color, 30 min.
Jr. High - General Adult
Activism, Environmentalism

[Reviewed by Cliff Glaviano, formerly with Bowling Green State University Libraries, Bowling Green, OH](#)

 Highly Recommended

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This is the story of how a small community came together to fight a long (2008-2013), successful battle to eliminate an invasive species of phragmites or common reed, from the shores of a tiny freshwater lake on eastern Long Island. The phragmites grew 12 to 15 feet tall in extremely dense masses, blocking homeowners' views and destroying waterfowl nesting sites. Disturbed by the degradation to the environment, local resident, Lori Luscher, obtained a grant from the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with the aim of removing the phragmites and restoring native plants to Marion Lake. Since the DEC grant was a matching grant, Luscher and recruits from the community donated their time and dollars to attempt the difficult eradication of phragmites. Fundraising included rummage sales at area community festivals.

The eradication of the reeds included several cuttings over a three year period, removing the reed cuttings to keep them from re-establishing themselves, and culminated in treating the phragmites with an herbicide and replanting native plants in 2011. There is a need for constant vigilance to keep the phragmites from reestablishing but the replanted native species were apparently out-competing the invasive plants in the Marion Lake habitat soon after replanting. By 2012, the fifth year of the battle, only a minimum of cutting and clearing was necessary and most native plants were reestablished. Wildlife and nesting waterfowl returned. Overall, the film does an excellent job of showing the hard work and cooperation needed to fight a successful battle to remove invasive species and effect habitat restoration.

This film is **highly recommended** to audiences with an interest, or with potential interest in habitat restoration or removal of invasive plants. Though similar projects may be long, arduous and expensive in terms of monetary and volunteer resources, *The Marion Lake Story*, is a testimony to the aesthetic and personal rewards that completing a restoration can have. On Long Island, the success story in East Marion is being promoted as part of the [WAVES](#) (Water Advocates, Volunteers, Enthusiasts & Students) campaign to improve water quality and Long Island communities.