

Common Reed (*Phragmites*)

Category: Control

Distribution: Bear Lake area, Lower Snake River, Coeur d'Alene river

Diagnostic Characteristics

- Perennial, wetland grass that can grow to 15' tall
- Forms dense stands
- Stems round, hollow, and somewhat rough to touch
- Leaves are long (up to 24" by 2" wide), gradually taper to a point
- Leaves blue-green, held closely along the stem
- Leaf sheathes present and stems erect during winter
- Flowers purple to golden
- Seed head is multi-branched, 8" to 16" long
- Rhizomes long, stout, creeping



Background

- Common reed can propagate from seeds or from its long, stout creeping rhizomes
- Crowds out native species, alters wetland hydrology, reduces access for human use, and creates fire hazards from dry plant material



Invasive *Phragmites* inflorescence



Native *Phragmites* inflorescence



Invasive *Phragmites* rhizomes

Comparison of Native and Invasive *Phragmites*

Native *Phragmites*

- Rarely grows over 8' tall
- Grows in low-density stands, usually with other native plants
- Stems are delicate, smooth, and reddish towards the base
- Leaves yellowish-green
- Leaf sheathes rarely persist through the winter
- Stems rarely survive standing through the winter
- Stems may have small black spots (fungal infection)
- Flowers on a leafless pinkish spike emerging about 6" from surface

