

## **Gateway Commission Joins Partners to Rid the Lords Cove Marsh of Invasive Phragmites**

Lyme, Connecticut: At a meeting on Thursday, January 26, 2017, the Gateway Commission voted to join a partnership consisting of the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, The Nature Conservancy, the Connecticut River Gateway Commission as well as private citizens in an effort to rid historic Eli Meadow in the Lord Cove area of Lyme of the invasive reed commonly known as “phragmites”. The three-year program will include the cutting of the invasive reed followed by the application of an EPA-approved herbicide. When invasive phragmites flourishes, its denseness prevents natural marsh vegetation from growing and all but drives out wildlife due to its densely packed nature.

The Lower Connecticut River Valley has been honored since 1994 with numerous recognitions include an international designation as a “Wetlands of International Significance” with respect to waterfowl by the Ramsar Convention, a national designation as a “National Blueway” by the US Department of the Interior, a national designation by President William Clinton as an “American Heritage River” and a Nature Conservancy designation of “One of 40 Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere”. Among many other qualities, the salt, brackish and fresh water marshes are recognized as a vitally important stopover point for both northerly and southerly migrations of birds and an integral part of the “natural and traditional riverway scene” in the lower Connecticut River, a viewshed the Gateway Commission is empowered to protect.

Although phragmites control has been conducted in the past by the Connecticut DEEP, dwindling State and Federal conservation funds require that eradication efforts be taken on by the many conservation partners that conduct business in the Lower Connecticut River Valley, which includes the Gateway Commission. This truly unique federal, state and regional partnership will also include private benefactors who live in and around Eli Meadow.

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission is statutorily-enabled conservation organization that has as its central mission the protection of both the scenic and ecological quality with the Lower Connecticut River. The Commission has been protecting the river for almost 45 years.