

## **Weed-spraying program begins May 30**

Lanark County, joined by Drummond/North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands and Beckwith townships, has entered into a contract with Wagar & Corput Weed Control Inc. to control weeds by spraying along particular identified rural roadsides from May 30 to June 30, weather permitting.

The 2016 program follows a pilot project conducted last year to determine best practices for controlling noxious plants.

“We control roadside vegetation on county property for several reasons and in various ways,” explains Janet Tysick, Lanark County Public Works business manager. “It’s important for motorist safety that we maintain sight lines. It also helps with proper drainage, prevents road surface erosion and prevents the spread of invasive species onto adjacent properties. Wild parsnip has become particularly aggressive and can cause health risks, such as burns and rashes, when it comes into contact with human skin with exposure to the sun. It also out-competes native vegetation and can reduce the quality of some agricultural crops.”

Ms. Tysick said roadside spraying is only one of the pest-management principles the county uses in its efforts to control this aggressive invasive species. “We will also be conducting accelerated mowing, which means more mowing and mowing multiple times in certain areas. Many areas are not conducive to mowing due to terrain. In very low infestation areas there may be some manual extraction. We will be doing some test sites for each method to determine future best practices.” She notes areas that were sprayed last year have shown good re-growth of natural flora.

As approved by the provincial Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the county has issued a public notice of its intent to apply herbicide and a list of the affected roads. Only roads listed in the public notice are being sprayed with the herbicide. Extensive information, including maps, can be found on the county website at <http://www.lanarkcounty.ca/Page1875.aspx>.

If their road is on the list of those being sprayed, landowners can submit a no-spraying request form and obtain signage for the start and finish of the road allowance in front of their property. “Check with the county or, if it is a participating township road, the local municipality to confirm whether your section of the listed road is being sprayed, as some sections are excluded,” Ms. Tysick said.

The request form can be submitted by e-mail or fax, and signs are available at the county public works building (99 Christie Lake Rd.) or the Drummond/North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands and Beckwith township offices. For residents unable to pick up a sign, they can make their own using the specifications provided on the website.

The spraying is conducted by a qualified contractor licensed by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change under requirements of the Pesticides Act, and strict guidelines are followed. Spraying will only occur in unmaintained ditches on the listed roads, and they will be sprayed from the edge of the shoulder to about one metre from the fence line. Roadside ditches maintained by property owners will not be sprayed. A 10-metre buffer is required from freshwater habitat. Sprayers are turned off at mailboxes or whenever a pedestrian is nearby, and it only occurs in appropriate weather

conditions.

A county supervisor will escort the contractor to warn of pedestrians, waterbodies, mowed lawns or no-spraying signage during the process.

“These efforts are to try to control the spread of wild parsnip,” Ms. Tysick added. “We know we won’t get rid of it, but we are trying to control it and reduce the public health risk.”

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For more information, contact:

Janet Tysick

Business Manager

Lanark County

1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3110