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PhragNet: Crowdsourcing Phragmites Management Data

Invasive *Phragmites australis* threatens coastal Great Lakes habitats by forming dense thickets that displace native vegetation and reduce wildlife habitat. Several uncertainties complicate *Phragmites* management including roles of environmental variables in invasions and responses to treatments. We employed crowdsourcing to build a professionally-diverse collaborative learning network (“PhragNet”) consisting of 43 managers, primarily located in the Midwest. From volunteer stewards to professional biologists, participants share a common objective: to collectively learn about monitoring and managing *Phragmites*. Participants contribute data including community composition and hydrology of invaded sites, submit soil samples for nutrient analysis, and submit *Phragmites* tissue for genetic analysis. Thus far, participants have contributed data, soil and *Phragmites* samples from 14 sites comprising 23 ha. The data inform models of invasion, from which we generate situation-specific management recommendations. PhragNet is integrated with decision support tools for invasive species management developed in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Chicago Botanic Garden. By joining PhragNet, participants connect with a larger network of National Wildlife Refuge managers. PhragNet represents a framework for collaborative, management-driven research that could be adapted to other coastal restoration and invasive species management efforts.