

# Habitat Conservation Area

## *A Self-Guided Interactive Tour Activities*

### PHRAGMITES

Once you are done observing the turtles and wildlife in the first area, walk back down the berm, turn left on the path and another left at the boulder that looks like a dinosaur egg! Calling it a dinosaur egg may not be the craziest thing to hear, as the plant to your right, called Phragmites, is a prehistoric plant that has been around since the dinosaurs.

Phragmites have tan or beige stems with blue-green leaves, large, dense seed heads and are considered an invasive species in Canada. Invasive species generally lack natural predators in their new surroundings, adapt easily to a range of environmental conditions and reproduce at a rapid rate. They can disrupt ecosystems and cause harm and stress to native species, including species at risk, by altering food webs, affecting nutrient cycling and displacing native species. These changes are often irreversible and can result in decreased biodiversity. Phragmites thrive in disturbed habitats and while they prefer growing in standing water, their roots can grow to extreme lengths and extend deep into the soil to find and access moisture to survive in relatively dry areas. These specialized roots also secrete toxins into the soil to impede the growth of and kill neighbouring plants.