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**Environment and Sustainability Committee**

**March 3, 2011**

**March 9, 2011**

**April 7, 2011**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Townsend".

Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

**DATE:** January 12, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Invasive Species

**ORIGIN**

Halifax Regional Council, April 13, 2010, Item No. 11.1.2

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that The Environment and Sustainability Committee endorse and recommend to Halifax Regional Council the following service delivery expectations related to Invasive Species for the 2011/2012 fiscal year:

1. That staff prioritize efforts and staff resource allocation to Water Resource Management in 2011, and plan for an update to the Alien Invasive Species Strategy in 2012/2013;
2. That no new budget requests be made for invasive species management efforts in 2011/2012;
3. That no new service delivery related to Alien Invasive Species Management be planned for 2011/2012;
4. That staff continue to provide public information on the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) website on current recommendations related to invasive species management issues; and
5. That staff forward, for budget consideration in 2012/2013, a resourcing plan to enable municipal advancement on invasive species management.

## **BACKGROUND**

On April 13, 2010, Regional Council approved the following motion:

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the following Staff Action Plan surrounding Alien Invasive Species:

1. Work with other levels of Government, NGO's, and Community to identify Alien Invasive Species in Halifax Regional Municipality, to create a basic map of impacts in HRM and post on the HRM website;
2. Identify Provincial and Federal actions addressing Alien Invasive Species and include in HRM communications (website, Naturally Green, etc.);
3. Spend no new money on this Staff Action Plan and utilize existing Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) and HRM staffing resources; and
4. Identify specific actions for inclusion in the Climate Change Risk Management Strategy developed under ClimateSMART

## **DISCUSSION**

In 2010, SEMO office resources were highly consumed responding to the impacts of invasive species, namely:

- European Fire Ants;
- Black Legged (Deer) Ticks;
- Giant Hogweed; plus
- Aquatic invasives (Floating Yellow Heart and stressors to Lake Banook and MicMac), which pressured staff resources.

This report is a clarification of where to allocate resources and give Councillors the opportunity to provide staff direction.

### **Budget Impacts to HRM in 2010/2011**

#### **Giant Hogweed:**

- Costs to the municipality to remove from HRM property (i.e. trails and parks): \$10,000
  - This was paid from a split of Municipal Operations Operating Accounts; and
  - Consisted of a price agreement with a Landscaper to attend to, remove, and dispose of by hydroclave disposal (steam blasted, which is normal for foreign waste from ships and airplanes and medical waste).
- The municipality offered no private remediation; and
- The municipality offered no Solid Waste Resources service delivery

**European Fire Ants:**

- Cost to the municipality to remedy on HRM property: under \$1,000
  - Paid from SEMO Research Data Acquisition in 2010, will need to be paid from Municipal Operations in ongoing years; and
  - Consisted of SEMO Pesticide Permitting Staff deployment of KM AntPro Bait Stations and baiting solution with boric acid.
- The municipality offered no private or community remediation; and
- SEMO assisted research efforts with Saint Mary's University Graduate student studying the impacts of European Fire Ants in an urban environment, at a cost of \$5,000.

**Black Legged Ticks:**

- The most resource allocation on Black Legged Ticks was employee hours (approximately 200 hours allocated);
- SEMO/Municipal Operations split costs for Deer Bait Stations put in Admirals Cove Park (under \$10,000); and
- Municipal Operations will handle costs of maintenance of Deer Bait Stations on an ongoing basis.

**Staff Recommended Costs and Service Delivery in 2011/2012**

**Giant Hogweed:**

Staff expect comparable pressures in 2011. There is a risk of increased presence and magnified germination. As such, staff is recommending the following service delivery expectations:

- Continuation of Price Agreement with a professional landscaper to remove identified Giant Hogweed from HRM Property and dispose via hydroclave;
- HRM will not initiate a search and remove operation; and
- Recommendation to the public to engage a professional landscaper for removal and disposal. This is logical for reasons of safety and cost. The highest risk of physical impact is on removal and handling. Setting up an HRM disposal location would encourage handling and expose HRM staff to the same risk. This recommendation may change should the prevalence of Giant Hogweed magnify in future years.

HRM budget requirement for 2011/2012: \$10,000 from Municipal Operations.

Additionally, SEMO staff recommends that Invasive Species training be provided to HRM outside workers to assist with identification of invasives for reasons of occupational safety and public safety. Budget for training: \$10,000 plus costs of staff time.

**European Fire Ants:**

Staff expect comparable pressures in 2011. Staff recommends the following service delivery expectations:

- Continuation of provision of best information on [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca);
- Response to identification of Fire Ant infestations on HRM property with KM AntPro Bait Stations;
- No Community remediation efforts; and
- No private remediation.

HRM budget requirement for 2011/2012: \$1,000 from Municipal Operations

**Black Legged Ticks:**

**\*\*Note:** Staff is aware that BLT's have been identified in Hammonds Plains, Fall River and Tantallon. It is expected that the public's desire for information will increase.

- Provision of maintenance of the Admirals Cove Park Deer Bait Stations;
- Update of information on [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca); and
- No further remediation activity (spraying, Bait Stations, landscaping, etc.).

HRM budget requirement for 2011/2012: \$10,000 from Municipal Operations

**Other Invasives:**

Staff expect there will be other pressures this fiscal year. The expectation is that SEMO will continue to provide best information to the public and collaborate with subject matter experts on determining response requirements.

**Update on Staff Action Plan**

SEMO staff has made preliminary contacts with subject matter stakeholders. However, with personnel resources being dedicated to other priorities and responding to other unplanned pressures, there is little progress to date. For the remainder of the 2010/2011 fiscal year, and the early part of the 2011/2012 fiscal year, SEMO staff intends to prioritize the staff resource that was identified to work on this file to Water Resource Management Issues. It is intended to progress the invasive species action plan next fiscal year.

Further, following the research work completed by Susan Horton in 2010/2011, it is understood that without an employment or contracting agreement in place, further local work on European Fire Ants is highly unlikely to continue. We have learned that European Fire Ants in HRM are acting in a unique and more resilient manner than in other localities, including Maine where the leading research is occurring. Without continued local research and testing of control and management measures, the likelihood of realizing effective broad recommendations for European Fire Ant Management is low. Current research was a benefit from Susan's Graduate work at Saint Mary's University. In order to continue to develop management approaches, it is estimated that an approximate two year term would be required. Outside of the academic circle, there does not appear to be a demand for work on European Fire Ant Management, and staff do not see any current academic work on the horizon to support.

In 2010/2011, the term resource that was allocated to Pesticide Permitting dealt with the response to Hogweed, Fire Ants and, to a lesser degree, ticks. With that resource not anticipated to be required under the new Provincial Regulations, and the budget reduction, this is an area where Service Delivery will decrease. Staff has not submitted a budget request for a new employee for this scope of work for the 2011/2012 budget.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Current budget pressures can be handled within the existing budget envelope. Further pressures related to increased service delivery around invasive species will require additional budget allocation.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community Information sharing continues to be the keystone of effort around Invasive Species Management. Empowering residents with timely, accurate and current information is the primary focus of staff's efforts.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Environment and Sustainability Committee may choose to direct staff to increase service delivery. This would require an increase in budget or reduction in service delivery from other areas.
2. The Environment and Sustainability Committee may choose to direct staff to engage in research on European Fire Ants and Invasives on an expedited basis. This would require either the approval of an FTE position (Environmental Performance Officer) or comparable outsourced contract. The approximate annual cost would be \$75,000.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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