



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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For Immediate Release

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REI Grant Funds Invasive Removal Program in Parks

The Fairfax County Park Authority and the outdoor recreational equipment company REI, Inc. are extending their partnership to help county residents take back their forests.

REI awarded the Park Authority's Invasive Management Area (IMA) program a \$10,000 grant to support the agency's Take Back the Forest program that is scheduled for April and May of 2015.

REI has donated \$45,000 through four grants to the Fairfax County Park Foundation over the past three years to support the national award-winning IMA program and its associated youth outreach efforts. Take Back the Forest is a vital promotional part of that outreach. The most recent Take Back the Forest program, which took place during April and May 2014, was hugely successful. Nearly 800 volunteers helped restore habitat during that time period, which included volunteer days such as Global Youth Service Day, Invasive Plant Removal Day, Earth Day and Arbor Day.

"The Park Foundation is very grateful to REI for their generous donations that have helped the Park Authority to restore more than 50 acres of valuable forest ecosystems in 40 local parks in Fairfax County," said Roberta Longworth, executive director of the Park Foundation. "Partners like REI are invaluable in ensuring that our residents have access to healthy parks."

IMA is a volunteer program designed to reduce invasive plants and increase biodiversity on parkland. The eight-year-old program helps keep forests healthy by encouraging residents to take care of their county's natural resources. It brings volunteers into the parks to remove non-native, invasive plants and supports habitat restoration through the planting of native species.

More information about the IMA program is on the Park Authority's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/IMA/ or available by calling IMA Coordinator Erin Stocksclaeder at 703-324-8681.

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