



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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For Immediate Release

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PSA-039

REI Grant Funds Invasive Removal Program in Parks

The Fairfax County Park Authority and REI are helping county residents take back the forest.

REI presented the Park Authority's Invasive Management Area (IMA) program with a \$10,000 grant to support the agency's Take Back the Forest program that got underway this spring. To mark the mid-point of this engaging program, IMA is participating in Virginia's Annual Invasive Plant Removal Day (IPR) on May 2 and 3, 2015. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up for IMA workdays, available at the IMA website, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/ima/ima-calendar.htm> and show their support for their local parks! Most IMA sites will focus on the removal of garlic mustard, a biennial herb which threatens native plants and animals in forest communities by outcompeting native plants with copious amounts of seed, and by secreting a chemical that prevents the germination of other plants. This is a plant that is easy for even the youngest nature lover to pull! All volunteers will receive a FREE Take Back the Forest t-shirt for their participation.

IMA is a volunteer program designed to reduce invasive plants and increase biodiversity on parkland.

This is the fourth grant, totaling \$45,000, that REI has given to the Fairfax County Park Foundation in the past two and a-half years to support the national award-winning IMA program and its associated youth outreach efforts. The most recent Take Back the Forest, which took place during April and May 2014, was hugely successful. Nearly 800 volunteers helped restore habitat during Take Back the Forest 2014, which included dates such as Global Youth Service Day, Invasive Plant Removal Day, Earth Day and Arbor Day.

IMA is an eight-year-old program that encourages residents to take care of the county's natural resources. It involves removing non-native, invasive plants and habitat restoration through the planting of native species. The program helps keep forests healthy.

There is more information about the IMA program on the Park Authority's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/IMA/. Or call Erin Stocksclaeder at 703-324-8681.



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.