



# FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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*For Immediate Release*

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## *Company Supports Invasive Management Program*

# REI Presents Sixth Grant to Park Foundation

REI, Inc., has found something of value to believe in inside the Fairfax County Park Authority.

For the sixth time, the outdoor equipment company is partnering with the Park Authority to support the agency’s Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program. REI recently presented the Fairfax County Park Foundation with a \$5,000 grant for IMA, a volunteer program designed to reduce invasive plants and increase biodiversity on parkland.

Over the years REI has provided \$60,000 to support the nationally recognized IMA program and its associated youth outreach efforts. The new funds will be used to continue the popular Take Back the Forest program that occurs in April and May each year. Take Back the Forest is an annual spring program to promote IMA.

REI’s support in 2016 helped Take Back the Forest bring 777 volunteers into parks. Those volunteers gave 2,738 hours to parks during April and May, despite many rainy weekends. An analysis based on Bureau of Labor statistics estimates the value of those hours to the Park Authority at more than \$63,000.

Volunteers can sign up for IMA workdays through the Invasive Management Area Calendar web page at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/ima/ima-calendar.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/ima/ima-calendar.htm). IMA is more than just pulling weeds. Key components of this program are habitat restoration and a long-term commitment to a park. Invasive plant species are difficult to remove and control, but with the help of IMA volunteers, undesirable non-native, invasive plants are removed manually, and native plants are returned to the habitat. The job of volunteers does not end once the invasive plants are removed. Often it is necessary to plant native species. Native plantings take place in the spring and fall.

IMA is a ten-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.

More information about IMA is available on the Park Authority’s website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/ima](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/ima) or by calling Erin Stocksclaeder at 703-324-8681.

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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.