

Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



VOLUNTEER GROUPS PULL INVASIVE SPECIES IN WHITE'S WOODS

On two consecutive April Saturdays, 13 university and community organizations united to help rid White's Woods of Japanese barberry, a non-native invasive plant that crowds out native plants.

The successful pull resulted in close to 200 fifty-gallon bags of pulled barberry that were later collected by White Township crews. The township also provided work gloves and removal bags for the effort. Volunteers totaled 142 with Friends of White's Woods members, organizers of the pull, serving as team leaders.

Participants included: Delta Zeta Sorority, Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity, Sigma Kappa Sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority, Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority, Alpha Xi Delta Sorority, Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, the Indiana Area Senior High School Key Club, the Plant Patrol, IUP Honors College students, IUP ROTC members, FWW and 41 members of the IUP football team.

Pennsylvania has joined a list of states that have banned Japanese barberry, including Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire and New York. The plant — a "prolific invader" — takes over and disrupts native ecosystems with its "dense, prickly thickets," according to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

FWW plans biweekly barberry pulls through the summer. To be notified of future pulls, visit the Friends of White's Woods website (https://www.friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events) or send an email to: info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org.

Your assistance is vital in saving the woods from this invasive species. Please participate when you can.



Members of seven IUP fraternities and sororities assisted in the barberry pull effort. Pictured is Lily Pierce from Sigma Kappa.



The IUP football team helped pull Japanese barberry from the woods.



Members of Plant Patrol demonstrated their expertise in eradicating the invasive species. Pictured from left to right: Loren Greene, Karen Greene, Ed Donley, Gavin Brown, Amy Provias and Lee Vest.

ATTEND MAY 2ND MEETING TO SUPPORT DRAFT PLAN

The White Township Stewardship Committee will meet Thursday, May 2, at 6:30 p.m to review the public feedback to the draft Stewardship Plan posted for review from Dec.23 to March 22. The committee will consider possible revisions to the plan, if necessary, based on this feedback

FWW conducted a review of all of the public feedback submitted. A total of 208 individuals and two organization provided feedback with 200 (95%) respondents stating they support the draft plan (n=196) or the goals of the plan, (n=4), and in many cases indicated reasons for their support. The remaining eight responses critiqued grammar and/or specific management issues (e.g. deer browsing, ticks, erosion, dog walking, invasive plants), but did not evaluate the plan. None rejected the plan.

Citizens who provided specific reasons for their support of the plan most often cited: allowing the forest to mature to old growth, enrolling White's Woods in the Old Growth Forest Network (69%), using the least-intrusive management as the "default" choice, supporting natural forest maturation processes (59%), including public involvement in every management decision (58%) and non-removal of wood from the forest since dead wood is critically important to the health of the forest ecosystem (58%).

Some citizens encouraged hand-pulling of invasive plants and reliance on deer fencing (both components of the existing draft plan). A few commented on possible deer hunting with a majority of these comments (9 v. 3) calling for a ban on all hunting. (The draft stewardship plan cites hunting as a last resort for deer management.)

Many respondents noted the advantages of WWNC in their narrative, citing health benefits of exercise, close proximity to town, the desirability of the area to prospective residents, sharing nature with family/friends, and using the Nature Center for hiking, cross-country skiing, dog walking, and photography.

The meeting to be held in the White Township Municipal Building can be attended in-person or virtually (the link will be available on the Township website). Public attendance at this meeting will be important and helpful.

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

May 2: Stewardship Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., White Township Municipal building

May 9: Big Tree Walk in White's Woods. Dale Luthringer, DCNR education specialist, Cook State Forest. 5 p.m. 12th Street Entrance

May !7 and 18: May Mart: Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., S&T Bank Arena, White Township. Members needed to staff booth in two-hour shifts. Send email to info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org with your time availability.

CLIMATE CHANGE FACTS

CLIMATE CHANGE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Expect more flooding, heat, drought, disruption to agriculture, insects, increased costs for repairing infra-structure and recovery from major storm events, and health consequences.

- 1. Pennsylvania ranks 4th in the United States in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2. Temperatures have increased by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit in the last century and are expected to warm another 5.9 degrees by 2050.
- 3. The warmest parts of the state could experience up to 37 days above 95 degrees by 2050." -
- 4. Pennsylvania has seen a 70% increase in the frequency of heavy rain events in the past few decades—and expects more in the future.
- 5. Ticks, mosquitoes, and invasive plants thrive in warming weather. Pennsylvania now leads the nation in Lyme disease cases.
- 6. Following the global trend, Pennsylvania is seeing changing population distributions of animal and plant species.

DEP 2021 Climate Change Impacts Assessment

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOBAL IMPACT

Climate change is happening, and we have almost no time left to mitigate the most serious climate change impact. Economic and political upheaval, including competition for resources and necessary population migration as a consequence of ever-more intense storms, the impact on water and agriculture, real estate loss from sea-level rise, and disruptions to the energy sector are already occurring. Five islands have already been lost to rising seas. At least two U.S. towns - Valmeyer, Illinois, and Ilse de Jean Charles, Louisiana - have already moved to escape climate change effects (United Nations Report on Climate Change, March, 2023).

PLASTIC

1. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is growing and is now twice the size of Texas (three times the size of France). The trash is mostly plastic – because plastic does not



biodegrade, it just breaks into smaller and smaller, irretrievable bits. (The Ocean Cleanup)

- 2. Nurdles (tiny plastic pellets used to make plastic objects) are now found all through the oceans and on virtually every coastline around the world. Nobody knows how long nurdles will last in the sea, but it is estimated that a plastic bottle will take 450 years to break up. Plastic does not disappear and we cannot clean up small plastic once in the sea. (nurdlehunt.org)
- 3. Thousands of seabirds and sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it. (Center for Biological Diversity)
- 4. Microplastics have been found in air, water, food, animals, and human blood samples. A recent U.S. study found microplastics in all placentas tested. Also, all streams recently tested in Pennsylvania contained microplastics, much coming from synthetic clothing. (PennEnvironment)

WHAT CAN WE DO? Stop using disposable plastic products. Use your own water bottle, straws, take-out containers, utensils, and cloth bags and clothing. Preserve forests and plant trees. Trees absorb carbon and provide a critically important natural solution to climate change. Conserve energy. Buy locally produced food and products. Walk more. Drive less. Invest, where possible, in alternative energy products. VOTE CLIMATE. What do we owe future generations – and each other?

WHITE'S WOODS NATURE CENTER NOTES

The May 9th, 5 p.m. "Big Tree Walk" in White's Woods will be led by DCNR's Environmental Education Specialist Dale Luthringer. Luthringer, who received a 2022 Pennsylvania Conservation Stewardship Award, will take hikers to the biggest trees in White's Woods and explain big tree measurement. Luthringer has identified some trees as "witness" trees: "imagine what we would have seen if we'd stood here for 200 years." The "Big Tree Walk" will start at the Nature Center 12th Street entrance and last about 90 minutes.

Valuable Native Plants in White's Woods: With all of the focus on invasive plants, it may be all too easy to forget to celebrate the valuable array of native plants in White's Woods. Forest plant ecologist Dr. Marion Holmes, along with plant specialists Cindy Rogers and Dr. Dana Driscoll, have compiled lists of valuable native plants in the Nature Center. In addition to at least seven atrisk plant species, these experts' lists also identify 81 other valuable native plants in our community forest. One goal of removing the invasive plants is to make sure that we protect the "diverse assemblage" of native plant species that plant specialists have documented. One list of native plants can be found at the FWW website (Trail Information). Keep an eye out for FWW-sponsored plant walks that will be scheduled soon.

At-risk Birds in White's Woods:

Unfortunately, more and more birds, including some that have been the most commonly seen, are listed as at-risk in Eastern U.S. forests. Thanks to diligent local birders who document their bird sightings on ebird, we know that some birds whose populations are plummeting have been recently sighted in the Nature Center, including the Black-capped Chickadee. Rose-breasted Grosbeak Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, Indigo Bunting, Golden Crowned Kinglet, and Ovenbird. Mature forest habitats such as that provided by the White's Woods Nature Center are critical to the survival of these birds. And we owe many thanks to those who are documenting their presence.