

Project Title: Invasive Plant Removal Chestnut Hills Park

School: Yorktown HS

Contact(s): Ana Ratcliffe, Teresa Cordova, Steve Young

Brief summary of the project: Removed Invasive plants, primarily Wineberry, Japanese Honeysuckle, Porcelain Berry, Multiflora Rose, and English Ivy. We spent majority of time cutting English Ivy from the base of trees. Steve Young is a volunteer naturalist who helped us identify and provided procedures for removal. He helped us watch out for poison ivy, but we did not remove the poison ivy (it's native).

Getting Going

How did the project start? We met at the park and scouted locations.

Who were important people to contact at the beginning? Steve Young, naturalist.

What are the threshold resources that need to be identified at the beginning before proceeding further? (For example, robust parent volunteer network, elevated loading docks, nearby outdoor spigot.) Robust student volunteer network, mostly from Environmental Club and AP Environmental Science class, hand saws for removing plants, plenty of long gardening gloves. Kids needed to be reminded to wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, socks and shoes that cover toes. We made piles of debris and did not bag it.

What are the policies (if any) from APS or elsewhere that may affect the project and need to be considered? We did need to verify what property is private and stay off that property.

What budget and/or funding sources were needed? Steve Young and Arlington Naturalists supplied some hand saws, I supplied gloves.

Implementation

Did you pilot or test the project and then scale it up? If so, describe your process. We started with a smaller group of students and then grew to more events and larger groups.

We also got more saws from Steve after kids brought a few as well. Gloves were a big purchase, needed more and more each week. GET THE ONES THAT GO TO THE ELBOW.

As you rolled the project out, how did you present this to students and encourage their participation?

The club was highly motivated. I offered it as an alternative assignment for AP Environmental Science.

Approximately how many students were actively involved, and how many were affected?

What obstacles were overcome? Are there continuing obstacles? What lessons did you learn from doing this?

The main obstacles were finding student volunteers and equipment.

Will the project continue into future years? If so, how will you keep continuity? Do you plan modifications?

Yes, this will continue. The park has a huge area covered by invasives and will need continued maintenance.

What effect has it had on the school?

The area looks less overgrown, the neighbors have been supported and positive and the kids are learning valuable lessons about invasive species and how to manage and avoid in the future.