



News Release

Monongahela National Forest

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JOIN THE “2009 GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE!” - HELP US KEEP WEST VIRGINIA WILD AND WEED-FREE.

Finding quality time outdoors that everyone can enjoy and learn from can be difficult. The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA), AmeriCorps, and Monongahela National Forest have joined forces to offer outdoor enthusiasts an opportunity to help make a difference in the forests across the state of West Virginia. We will be sponsoring our first annual “Garlic Mustard Challenge” to provide an opportunity for people to learn about nonnative invasive species and to help us remove 10,000 pounds of garlic mustard from public lands.

Garlic mustard has gained much attention in recent years for its ability to rapidly invade wooded habitats from disturbed areas. Garlic mustard threatens the abundant wildflowers and diverse forest ecosystem of West Virginia. Many native wildflowers that hikers enjoy seeing during the spring such as spring beauty, wild ginger, bloodroot, Dutchman’s breeches, trilliums, and toothworts occur in the same habitat as garlic mustard. When garlic mustard is introduced to a new area, it out competes our native plants by aggressively monopolizing light, moisture, nutrients, soil, and space. Many wildlife species that depend on spring native plants for their foliage, pollen, nectar, fruits, seeds, and roots are deprived of these essential food sources when garlic mustard becomes established. And we are deprived of the vibrant display of beautiful spring wildflowers.

Originally introduced by European settlers for medicinal purposes and use in cooking, garlic mustard is now spreading throughout river floodplains, forests, roadsides, edges of woods, and along trails. That's why we have teamed up to challenge you to do your part to keep West Virginia “Wild and Weed Free.” We will be hosting three garlic mustard pulls across the state (others may be added at a later date), and we need your help. You can get a group of friends together and join one of our organized pulls, or you can even pull from your own yard. Every bag counts. And, a trophy will be given to those that pull the most! We will even teach you how to cook the plants that we collect (there are many popular recipes).

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JOIN THE “2009 GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE!” - HELP US KEEP WEST VIRGINIA WILD AND WEED-FREE (cont.).

The “2009 Garlic Mustard Challenge” will bring together a diverse range of people from all backgrounds and walks of life to work together to stop the spread of one of the most invasive species found in our state. This event is designed to be an enjoyable and memorable experience for all with lots of great prizes. Your help is definitely needed. The dates and locations for individual garlic mustard pulls are:

Big Bend Campground – April 25, 2009

Watoga State Park – May 9, 2009

Pocahontas County 4-H Camp – May 16, 2009

Summit Lake – May 23, 2009

For more information, please visit us online at http://www.afha.us/garlic_mustard/index.html or contact eburks@fs.fed.us for more information.

Take matters into your own hands and join us for this important event! A special thanks to our very generous partners and sponsors: C.J. Maggie’s American Grill, Hoosier National Forest Ironton Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), Kroger, Pepsi Cola Company, River to River CWMA, Southern Indiana CWMA, and Timberline Four Seasons Resort.



Among the greatest threats to the native plants of West Virginia is the invasive garlic mustard.

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