



Educators Tackle Invasive Plant Issues

Soil and Water Conservation District Educators meet at the Ironton District of the Wayne National Forest to discuss and treat Non-Native Invasive Species.



Soil and Water Conservation District Educator help pull Asian Stiltgrass infestation near Iron Ridge Campground.

Photo by Carrie Yaniko

The meeting was held for the south eastern Ohio Soil and Water Conservation District Education Specialists at the Ohio University Nature Center. The educators meet twice a year at different locations in the area, usually hosted by a different county each time. The people at this meeting were: Bill Wickerham, Adams Co.; Danielle Thompson, Brown Co.; Jenny Ridenour, Meigs Co.; Jeff Montavon and Marcheta Ferguson, Scioto Co.; Carrie Yaniko, Lawrence Co.

"The purpose of these meetings is to keep everyone in the area updated on events going on and to share different ideas for presentations," said Carrie Yaniko of the Lawrence County Soil and Water District (LCSWD).

"We usually try to work in a guest speaker and an event. Invasive species have been elevated to a prominent issue in the last few years and the educators realized some of these species are significantly affecting our environment." Yaniko added that she "thought it would be interesting to have the Forest Service speak about some of the invasive species that are hitting close to home and actually get to be a part of removing some of the problem."

Chad Kirschbaum, Ironton District Botanist, talked about the extent of invasive species infestations on the Ironton District of the Wayne National Forest. He also showed the group the Forest Service's current map of invasive species infestations and brought in fresh samples. "The group's knowledge of exotic species identification was tested with the samples and they did pretty well" Kirschbaum reported.

After the talk the group went out into the woods of the Vesuvius Recreation Area and hand pulled a large stilt grass infestation below Iron Ridge Campground.

"The LCSWD is an important partner of the Forest. We often help them with educational talks at schools and the annual Envirothon" said Kirschbaum. The partnership recently stepped up notch with the decision by the board LCSWD board to join the Forest Service in organizing Ohio's first Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). A CWMA is a formal cooperative agreement among government and private organizations to work together in order to combat the threat of invasive species.

Note:

Story written cooperatively with Chad Kirschbaum and Carrie Yaniko.

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