

# Forest Hero! Network

## Ideas for Engaging Our Communities

### *Outreach Ideas:*

- Organize a workday in your community.
- Get involved with a local Bioblitz/bliss (see North Branch Nature Center for an example).
- Send out seasonal invasive plant updates through Front Porch Forum.
- Write an article for your local paper.
- Volunteer with a local park district or non-profit, offering to help remove invasive plants.
- Set up a display in the spaces where people (usually) go:
  - Ex: Town Hall; summer farmers' markets or the local store; the transfer station.
- Work collaboratively with your local Conservation Commission.
  - Is there a project in town that needs volunteers? Help plan that event!
  - Be the voice to the Commission about the issue of invasive plants in your town, and make a record of your time at meetings.
- Partner with local school to do a garlic mustard pull event in May.
  - Combine it with a cooking lesson on how to make pesto! (if garlic mustard pulled from safe location, i.e. not near roads or other contaminants) .
- Work with a local Conservation District or similar organization to host restoration plantings in your town where invasive plants have been removed.
- Work with your local library
  - Create a display for local library (ex: the connection between invasive plants and ticks).
  - Host an activity such as reading "Miss Rumphius" with a discussion or craft afterwards.
  - Incorporate invasive plants into a fun craft, such as leaf rubbings.
- Give an evening virtual talk, hosted by a local organization like a birding group, nature center, museum, land trust, Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, etc. Here are some topic ideas:
  - In the spring, share alternatives to invasive plants for gardening.
  - In the summer, offer advice on removal, or the virtues of regional plants in landscape.
  - In the fall, share strategies for creating a management plan, or a talk on impacts to hunting.
  - Anytime, give a talk on how to identify common invasive plants, human health impacts (wild parsnip rash, ticks in barberry, etc.).
- Work with local scout or school groups:
  - Afterschool activities.
  - Can you help a local scouting troupe create a new badge for restoration work? Host a pull invasive plants event to help them earn that new badge! (Check out Burlington Intervale's Have a Heart Pull a Weed event).
- Hold a mapping workshop to teach community members how to use iNaturalist to map invasive plants, and have a town wide competition to see who can map the most invasive plants
- Go to local fish derbies or other recreation events and offer to have a table or workshop on invasive plants, and speak on how they impact that activity, and what simple steps everyone can take to help out.
- Get creative and create your own opportunities to talk with the public about invasive plants.