

Forest Hero! Network

Spreading the word, not the plant!

The work we do talking about and managing for invasive plants makes a difference in our forests, parks, natural lands, to the economy, to our fish and wildlife, and it makes a difference in our ability to enjoy the outdoors of Vermont. How we present this message of conservation work is crucial in making our work successful.

Here are some philosophies and messages that we've found often resonate with people, but remember to meet people where they are (i.e. there is a time and place for certain parts of these messages, and it's important to know your audience).

Philosophies

*Keep a positive attitude, and spin on a given situation.

e.g., instead of focusing on trying to manage every invasive plant, set priorities and achievable goals
--turn a big problem into smaller, doable solutions

*Eradication is not the goal.

i.e., Many invasive plants are well established in the landscape, but we can effect change on smaller scales to protect priority sites, and establish long-term control and containment.

*Recognize. Remove. Replant.

i.e., Identification is an important first step. Removing invasive plants is a good second step, but not the final one. Replanting or encouraging the reestablishment of existing locally evolved plant populations is critical in ensuring successful control and containment. And monitoring is part of continued stewardship of a site.

*Invasive plants are a symptom of historic poor land use and importation. This does not imply intent.

*Invasive species are spread by a lack of knowledge. This is why your work in your communities is so important.

*Invasive plants are not "evil" and they are not going away.

i.e. Prescribing intent to a species that is just doing what it does, can lead to compassion fatigue. With complete eradication not always possible, it's important to consider that having locally evolved plants present may be more important than having all invasive plants absent.

Phrases

*Spread the work, not the plant.

*You Can Make A Difference

*Learn. Get Involved. Make A Difference.