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Weed warriors battle destructive weed plant



by John Tracy
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ANCHORAGE, Alaska -- Westchester Lagoon became a battlefield this afternoon as a group of warriors went on the attack against a foreign invader.

The intruder is a weed called the Purple Loosestrife, and though nice to look at, it can slowly choke the life out of wetlands like Westchester Lagoon.



Today a group calling themselves "Citizen Weed Warriors" spent the afternoon removing as many of the wayward weeds as they could find.

Though it looks a bit like Fireweed at a distance, it can choke out most native plants in a short time. Purple Loosestrife was first spotted in Westchester Lagoon about three years ago.



How it got there is anyone's guess.

"Someone could have actually taken an ornamental Purple Loosestrife plant that they planted in their garden, and somehow the seeds escaped so that's another issue that we really need to focus on is kind of what people are buying for their own yards," Municipality of Anchorage Creek Development Manager David Wigglesworth explained.

The city is asking residents to be on the lookout for the weed, but be careful when disposing of it.

Each Purple Loosestrife plant can produce up to two million seeds.

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