

Municipality of
Anchorage



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Mark Begich, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITIZEN WEED WARRIORS TACKLE WESTCHESTER LAGOON

Volunteers work to eradicate the invasive purple loosestrife plant in local parks

The Citizen Weed Warriors Weed Pull is scheduled for Thursday September 28, 4-6pm. A dedicated group of volunteers can be found with waders, gloves and bags on the Westchester Nature Trail (corner of [Spenard Road and 19th Avenue](#)).

In 2005 purple loosestrife was found growing in an Alaskan wetland – Westchester Lagoon, right in the heart of the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. Purple loosestrife is a pretty garden plant that has escaped into the wild. It can quickly displace other native vegetation and result in choked waterways and degraded fish habitat. This plant was located last year by a sharp-eyed walker who at first thought it was fireweed. It was too late in the season for fireweed to be blooming so a call came for action. A rapid response by multiple agencies nipped this rogue plant in the bud.

Citizen Weeds Warriors is a new Anchorage Parks & Recreation program to help prevent the spread of invasive plants in our parks. In its pilot year with the Anchorage Park Foundation, Citizen Weeds Warriors conducted Weed Pulls during ‘Weed Awareness Week’ in June at Margaret Eagan Sullivan, Goose Lake, Taku Lake, Earthquake and Kincaid Parks. Over 80 people volunteered.

“Weed control in our parks is where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” commented Jamie Snyder, Invasive Plant Coordinator for the UAF Cooperative Extension Service. “It has been rewarding to see the community coming together to pull invasive plants in their local parks. Invasive plants are not an issue that will go away. We want to encourage people to be informed and have an avenue to make a difference.”

“It is great to see so many volunteers in their hip-boots working together to keep our waterways free for our salmon restoration project in this important and beautiful waterway. When the first Alaskan Girl Scouts earn their [Invasive Plant Patch](#) I want to be the first to thank them,” said Mayor Mark Begich.

(more)

Volunteers include:

USDA Forest Service

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

National Park Service

MOA Salmon in the City

Anchorage Waterways Council

Anchorage Audubon Society

Alaska Women's Environmental Network

Girl Scout Troop #329

Citizen Weeds Warriors is a program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and MOA Parks and Recreation Department. Funding for the 2006 pilot program is provided by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To get involved contact Margaret Timmerman, Recreation Programmer at 343-4217 or view the Citizen Weeds Warrior webpage:

<http://www.anchorageparkfoundation.org/projects/weedwarriors.htm>

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