



## Puttin' the Hurt on Invasive Species: Wayne NF 43, Garlic Mustard 0

*Garlic mustard is removed in Special Areas on the Ironton District to restore valuable habitats.*



Volunteers Barbara Lund and Jake Emmett, and Wayne NF employees pose proudly after pulling garlic mustard at Little Storms Creek.

Garlic mustard beware.

Wayne National Forest personnel, volunteers and partners are working hard to control garlic mustard in Lawrence County. Last week, 42 full bags of garlic mustard were pulled from Little Storms Creek Special Area and the Binion Wildfire Area.

Volunteers Jake Emmett and Barbara Lund were on hand to help treat these areas.

"The Summit Federal Prison crew helped pull 18 bags at Little Storms Creek last week," according to prison crew leader Glen Finley. Volunteers on Friday helped pull another six bags. At Binion, the Summit Crew and Crew Leader Michael Wagner pulled 19 bags, bringing the total number of garbage filled to 43. Score!

This seemingly innocent-looking plant was brought to our country for food by European colonizers. Garlic mustard's heart shaped leaves are an excellent source for vitamins.

District Botanist Chad Kirschbaum treats district employees to a dish of garlic mustard lasagna annually.

"Some think its pretty good, and I think others either find it unappealing or might be scared to try it," said Kirschbaum. Despite its culinary benefits, this invasive plant has severe consequences for the environment when it escapes into natural areas.

In the spring and early summer months, garlic mustard is easily spotted along roads, stream banks, moist woods, and forested pastures. It has small white flowers that are characteristic of plants in the mustard family. The leaves smell like garlic when they are crushed.

Garlic mustard is a prolific seeder, producing up to 8,000 seeds per plant. These seeds remain viable in the soil for up to eight years. Garlic mustard spreads rapidly once it gets into an area and can be extremely difficult to control if it is not pulled when the initial infestation is first noticed. It out-competes most native species for water and nutrients and forms a solid patch of smelly plants and white flowers.

Over the next two weeks more garlic mustard 'pull parties' are planned at Little Storms Creek and Binion.

"I hope to control garlic mustard on over 40 acres this year," Kirschbaum said. "At Binion, garlic mustard threatens a population of Running Buffalo Clover, a federally-endangered plant only found in a handful of places in Ohio."

At Little Storms Creek, the garlic mustard has been pulled for eight years. Forestry Technician Ed McFann said, "When we started pulling garlic mustard at Little Storms, it was thick. Underneath the garlic mustard, there was nothing growing. It was so thick you could fill five bags in an area the size of my cubicle."

Today, Little Storms Creek Special is a very diverse stream-side plant community with small patches and scattered individuals of garlic mustard. This week the Forest and its partners will continue to pull garlic mustard to conserve these valuable habitats.

Stay tuned for the final report on how the Wayne National Forest is pulling roots and taking leaves when it comes to garlic mustard this spring!

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