



**Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission**
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County of Ottawa
Press Release



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For Immediate Release

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[Suggested Tweet: Managing garlic mustard at the Parks is no picnic, but easier thanks to volunteers.]

Part Two of An Invasive Species & Land Management Series: **Volunteers Help to Battle Invasive Plants**

OTTAWA COUNTY, MI -- When it comes to managing invasive species, Ottawa County is certainly getting creative. Last week the Ottawa County Parks announced that they were bringing in goats to take on woody plants in some hard-to-manage areas. In some cases, however, the best way to manage a particular invasive plant is with good-old-fashioned sweat and manual labor.

This week, as part of an Earth Day observation, students from White Pines Middle School will kick-off the spring invasive species removal at several Ottawa County Parks. The primary plant targets: Garlic mustard and Spotted knapweed. The week's Earth Day events were supported by Light Corp, Meijer and the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee.

According to Michigan State University, **Garlic mustard** is an exotic invasive plant from Europe that invades woodland habitats in North America. Dense stands of garlic mustard threaten not only small plants like native wildflowers, but can also threaten many timber species. Many land managers consider it to be one of the most potentially harmful and difficult to control invasive plants in the region. Spotted knapweed generates quickly in roadsides and right-of-ways, old fields, pastures, undisturbed dry prairies and oak and pine barrens. Most problematic for Ottawa County Parks is Spotted knapweed's presence on dunes and beaches, where it crowds out native species.

- [Photos and tips for identifying spotted knapweed](#)
- [Photos and tips for identifying garlic mustard](#)

Along with students, many local businesses and clubs have "adopted parks" and will be heading out to pull and bag the plants throughout April and May. These include: Padnos, JCI, United Way, Alpha Theta Chi, Automatic Spring, GHSP, Harbor Industries, Cub Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Allendale Christian School, Home Depot, Friends of Ottawa County Parks, Jenison Public Schools, UA-174, Hillshire Brands, Black River Schools, and the Tri-Cities Garden Club.

The public can also help combat invasive species in several ways. One way is to participate in a workday. Grab your gardening gloves and show up to help on:

- May 3, 10am, Hager Park
- May 8, 6pm, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks
- May 10, 10am, Tunnel Park
- May 31, 10am, Rosy Mound Natural Area
- June 5, 6pm, Rosy Mound Natural Area

There is no need to register. Everyone is welcome, however, youth should come with adult supervision. Events are cancelled if raining.

A second way the public can help manage invasive species is by removing the plants from their own property. Pulling these plants each year, before they seed, is critical. And with seeds remaining viable for ten years, it's an annual job. Doing so will improve the health of individual properties as well as all of the land in the region. Reporting your own pulls to the Stewardship Network's Garlic Mustard Challenge can help West Michigan win the battle against the plant and against other communities as well. Visit www.stewardshipnetwork.org to learn more about the challenge and to report your pulls.

For additional announcements, "like" the parks at facebook.com/OttawaCountyParks. Visit miOttawa.org/parks to learn more about the 6400 acres of parks and open spaces available for your enjoyment. Operations, improvements and programs are funded by grants and a parks millage. If you own a \$150,000 home, you pay \$24 annually investing in opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature education today and for future generations.

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