



Vegetation Management Update & Weed Warrior Volunteer Program

Friends of Sligo Creek & Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
Meeting

June 23, 2020



Ryan Colliton

Corinne Stephens

Vegetation Management Unit

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks, Montgomery County



Vegetation Management Update

Ryan Colliton – Principal Natural Resources Specialist
Vegetation Management Unit



Goals and Objectives (Measurable and Achievable)

- **Goal: Conservation of native biodiversity (flora and fauna) through the management of vegetation**
- Objective 1: Establish prioritization matrix by spring 2020
- Objective 2: Establish baseline conditions (invasive species coverage, native diversity, RTE, etc.) by summer 2020
- Objective 3: Establish habitat classifications based on Maryland Classification by fall 2020
- Objective 4: Develop early detection rapid response system by winter 2020



Prioritization

- Categories: Size, floristic diversity, % invasive cover, RTE species, habitat ranking, edge to interior, connectivity

Size: larger habitats can support larger populations, larger populations are more stable

Floristic Diversity: native richness and abundance, current status of habitat

Invasive Species Coverage: ROI



Prioritization Continued

RTE: species conservation, regulatory, biodiversity

Habitat Classification: Habitats are ranked by their rareness within the state

Edge to interior ratio: Conservation of core/interior habitat

Connectivity: square footage of divisions (fragmentation)



Establish Baseline Conditions

Native floristic biodiversity, RTE species, invasive species coverage

- Establish permanent plots
- Assessment of historic populations of RTE species
 - NNI Quick assessment method, point survey

(Need to stay focused and do the work to collect the data and make decisions based on the results – mission creep)

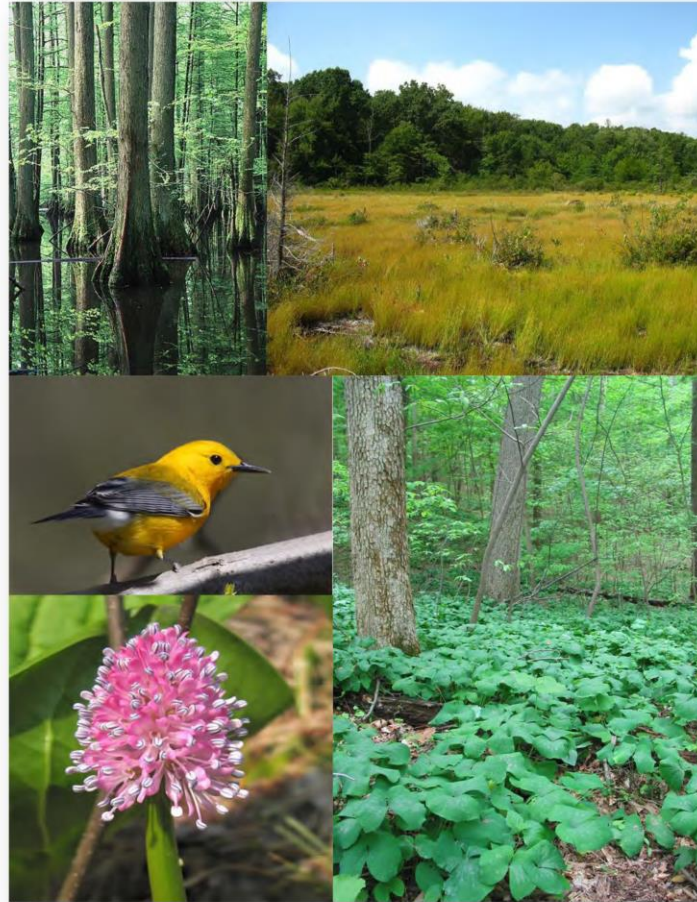


Habitat Classification System

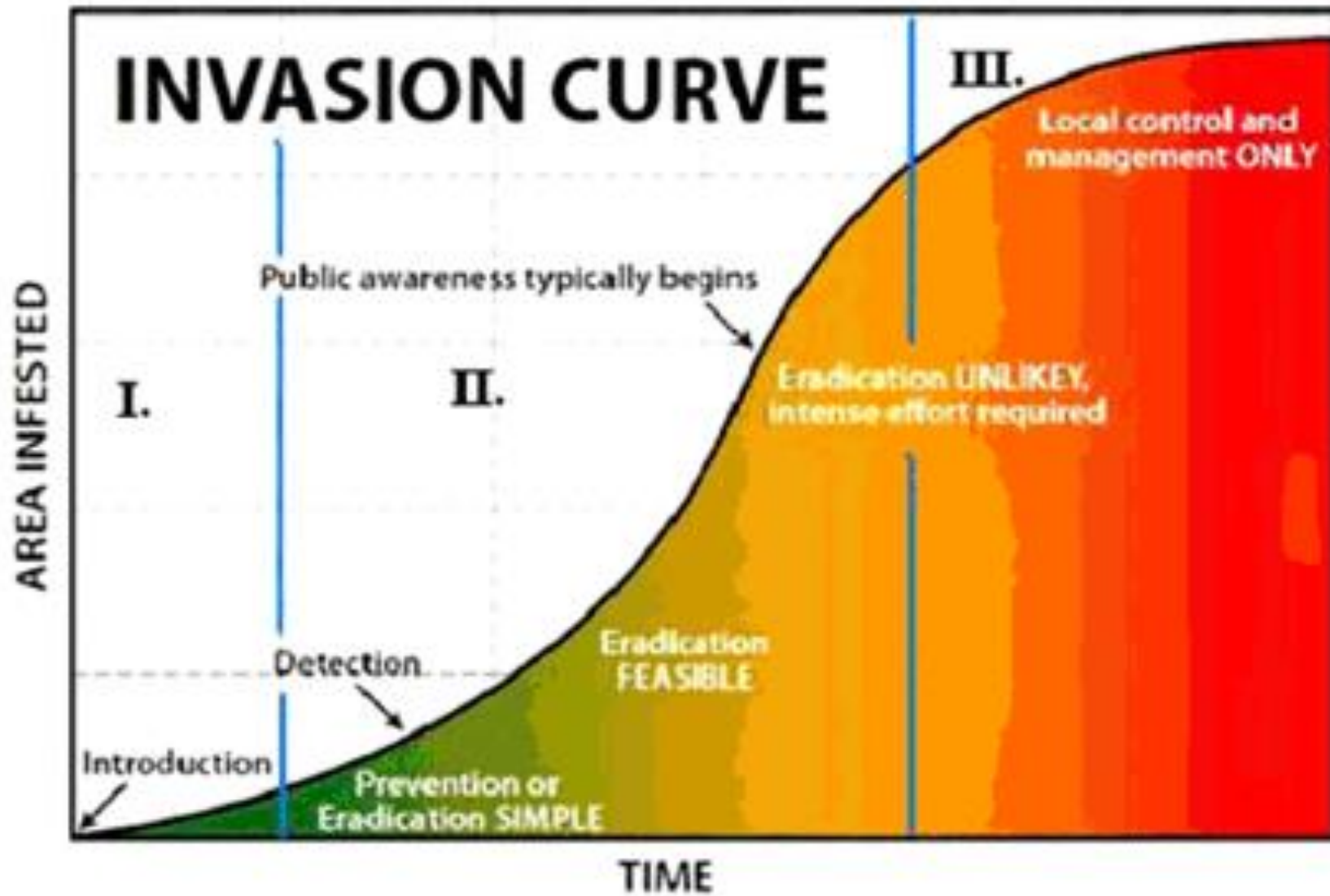
- Maryland Habitat Classification: State Ranked Habitats based on their rareness
- (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5)
- Examples: Serpentine Red Maple – Virginia Pine/ Greenbriar Forest (S2), North-Central Appalachian Acidic Shale Woodland (S2)
- What is the status??? (Impact of COVID-19)

THE NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF MARYLAND

2016 NATURAL COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK



Wildlife and Heritage Service



Early Detection Rapid Response



How does this fit into the Vegetation Management Program

- 1) Conservation, 2) Consultation, 3) Mitigation
- Conservation through vegetation management program including the WW program
- Consultation on projects impacting parkland
- Mitigation projects to compensate for land impacts on parks property



Special Projects

- Weed Warriors – Move to a restoration paradigm, provide strategic follow-up, engage in monitoring activities, native plantings where appropriate
- Pope Farm – assess ability to propagate native species for WW sites
- Nature Center Collaborative – Work with Nature Centers (especially those with dedicated WWs) on select restoration projects
- Meadow management – Separate program to manage this unique habitat
- FIL funds: identifying restoration priorities
- Invasive Species Prioritization: what to work on first?
- Annual reports: centralized data storage, annual tracking of work



Weed Warrior Volunteer Program

Corinne Stephens

Senior Natural Resources Specialist

Weed Warrior Volunteer Coordinator

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks, Montgomery County

Corinne.Stephens@montgomeryparks.org

www.WeedWarrior.org



Non-Native, Invasive Plant (NNI)

A plant that evolved in another part of the world (introduced intentionally or accidentally to our area), **which is capable of spreading rapidly, causing ecological or economic harm or is a threat to human health.**

kudzu covers a bush



bush honeysuckle covered in porcelainberry





Weed Warrior Volunteer Program

www.WeedWarrior.org

- Created in 1999
- Empowers community members to help Montgomery Parks staff manage NNIs on parkland
- Volunteers taught to ID and manage specific NNI species using BMPs
- Top priority = save trees from NNI vines
- Hand control methods only
- Coming Soon: restoration paradigm

this tree is a priority;
let's conquer NNI vines before
they are out of control





WW Priority NNI Species list

First Priority Species (Vines)

- English Ivy
- Japanese Honeysuckle
- Mile-a-Minute
- Oriental Bittersweet
- Porcelainberry
- Wintercreeper



mile-a-minute leaf & barbs

Second Priority Species

- Autumn Olive
- Bush Honeysuckle
- Garlic Mustard (flowering & not seeding)
- Japanese Barberry
- Multiflora Rose
- Wineberry



bush honeysuckle flower



flowering garlic mustard



WW Priority NNI Species list

Third Priority Species (Vines)

- Bradford Pear seedlings
- Japanese Stiltgrass (small infestations only)
- Wavyleaf Basketgrass (small infestations only)
- Winged Burningbush/Euonymus



wavyleaf basketgrass



winged burningbush

Fourth Priority Species

- Kudzu (small infestations only)
- Wisteria



wisteria



Two Weed Warrior Certification Levels

Level 1 Certified Weed Warriors

- Control 1st priority NNI vines



English ivy

Level 2 Certified Weed Warriors

- Control *all of* the approved plant species



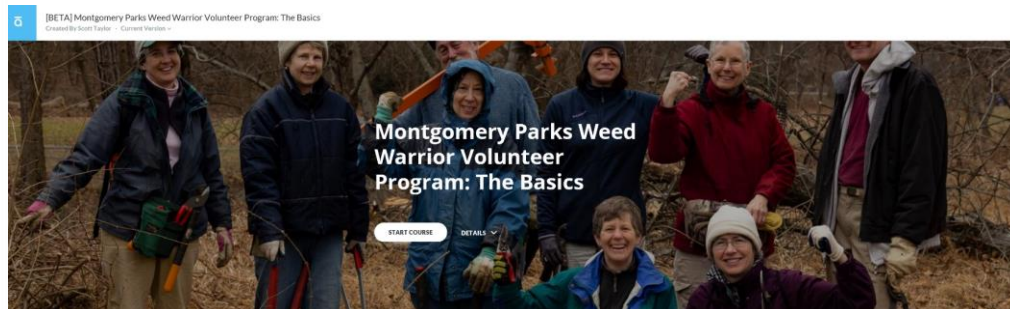
flowering Japanese barberry

***All Weed Warriors, certified prior to 2020=
Grandfathered into the Level 2 Certified Weed Warrior designation***

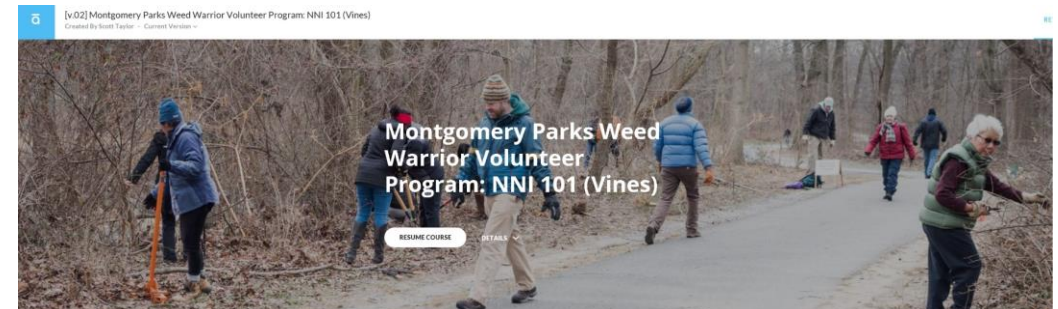


Requirements: Level 1 Weed Warrior Certification

- Participate in at least 2 [Weed Warrior Workdays](#)
- Complete the online e-course: The Basics
- Complete the online e-course: NNI 101 (Vines)
- Attend a classroom training
- Participate in a field training with Montgomery Parks Staff



E-course: The Basics [in beta testing]



E-course: NNI 101 (Vines) [in beta testing]



Reminder

Per the announcement that Montgomery Parks programs are cancelled and facilities are closed, all group volunteer projects are cancelled through June 30th. The Montgomery Parks COVID-19 webpage will continue to be updated as we learn more:

<https://www.montgomeryparks.org/covid-19>





Weed Warrior Supervisors

Specially trained and authorized to lead groups and Weed Warrior Workdays

Weed Warrior Supervisors:

In and Around Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek watersheds

- Jim Anderson
- Rochelle Bartolomei
- Ross Campbell
- Larry Hush
- Ellen Mann



- Kathleen Michels
- Greg Odegarden
- Allison Rivetti
- Kathy Treat
- Katya Vert-Wong

WW Supervisor Greg shows how to ID a plant in winter



2020 Weed Warrior Reported Volunteer Service Hours (as of 6/15/20)

NW Branch and Sligo Creek watersheds

1,195 HOURS

All Montgomery County watersheds

3,118 HOURS



Sligo Weed Warriors with large bittersweet vine
Fall 2019



Weed Warriors are Invaluable Partners

- It will take long-term dedication for us to recover from extensive NNI infestations; this effort starts by protecting our existing high-quality areas first and moving outward from there.
- The Montgomery Parks Natural Resources Stewardship team is small and dealing with NNIs is just one of its many tasks.
- The Regional Park Management staff also devote resources to NNI removal.
- Modest funding in recent years has enabled us to hire natural resources management contractors.
- Weed Warriors= Main boots on the ground in the NW Branch and Sligo watersheds!!



Coming Soon

1. E-courses for current Weed Warriors to review
2. Trainings (e-courses and in-person) for new Weed Warriors
3. Weed Warrior (New) Supervisor Trainings
4. Training for certified Weed Warriors who want to help us monitor
5. Community-involved native plantings in areas where Weed Warriors are making positive progress



WW Supervisor Dick Kerr trains new volunteers



Successful Sligo Weed Warriors



NNI Resources

Online Field Guides:

- [Mistaken Identity-Invasive Plants and their Native Lookalikes: An Identification Guide for the Mid-Atlantic](#)
- [Plant Invaders of the Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas](#)
- [Common Non-Native, Invasive Plants- MD DNR printable cards \(print and fold into cards\)](#)

Professional Plant Identification Websites:

- [Wildflower Identification Website](#)
- [A Community for Naturalists \(iNaturalist\)](#)
- [Leafsnap: An Electronic Field Guide and Free Phone App](#)

Local Facebook Discussion Groups:

- [Invasive Plant ID & Removal Facebook Group:](#)
Moderated by Certified Weed Warrior, Keith Sanderson
- [Capital Naturalist Facebook Group for the Washington, DC area](#)



porcelainberry berries

Please note, these links are not produced or moderated by Montgomery Parks



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Montgomery County

Corinne.Stephens@montgomeryparks.org

www.WeedWarrior.org



Please contact me for more info, if you want to be trained as a Certified Weed Warrior, or if you are already a Weed Warrior and want to be a supervisor and lead groups!