

Instructions, Guidance, and Directions for “Third Sunday” Invasive Plant Removals at Long Branch Nature Center, Arlington VA 22204 USA

What We Do

For these monthly volunteer events, we focus on removing non-native invasive plants that are harming the natural ecosystem of Long Branch Nature Center and its surrounding Glencarlyn Park. We also incidentally clean up trash we encounter and discuss fun things we see and hear while outdoors.

Why We Do It

We do this volunteer work to augment what Arlington County staff and contractors are able to do with limited resources. By removing the invasives, we help to heal and restore the natural biodiversity of the ecosystem. Our work benefits animals like birds, turtles, and salamanders and insects and native plants like beautiful Spring wildflowers. We also teach and learn and try to have some fun.

When We Meet and Work

These events are typically held on the “third Sunday” of the month, from 2-4 PM.

Where We Meet

We meet at the parking lot of Long Branch Nature Center in Arlington, address 625 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington VA 22204. If you need directions as a first-time visitor, see bottom paragraph below.

How We Do It

First of all, we are following guidelines from the CDC and local authorities for the duration of the SARS-CoV-2 (“virus”) outbreak. That means a maximum group size of 10 people, and we practice social distancing (6-foot minimum separation) and wear masks at all times. We ask volunteers to bring their own tools (although tools are NOT necessary) and sturdy workgloves that can protect from thorns and possible poison ivy. Also consider bringing hand sanitizer. If you bring tools, no need for digging implements. Pruners/clippers or a small folding saw can be useful.

Sorry, but for safety as a general rule no children under 12 are permitted. Children under 16 must have a responsible adult with them.

Typically we are manually pulling up invasive plants. Sometimes we cut stubborn vines and bushes. Small folding handsaws or pruners are very useful for this, if you have one. Sometimes we bag the plants if they have seeds we want to prevent from spreading. Bags will be provided.

Instructions will be provided and volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and learn.

We dress for the weather and for safety and to minimize exposure to possible hazards including the sun, thorns, poison ivy, sharp sticks, Yellowjacket wasps, ticks, falling objects, and tripping dangers. Covering as much skin as possible is strongly recommended. Sturdy shoes without exposed toes are important. Consider sunscreen and possibly insect repellent in warm weather. Hats help protect from the sun and possible falling debris.

Bringing drinking water in a reusable container is a good idea, and you might want to bring a personal snack for a break.

We want our volunteers to work at their own pace and have fun. We understand that some volunteers may need to leave before we wrap up at 4 PM.

We do often walk some distance and may cross uneven ground, so please consider whether you are comfortable with that and with some exertion pulling plants.

We do not cancel due to weather unless the weather is genuinely severe: lightning, flooding, or ice or dangerous snow conditions. We proceed in ordinary rain conditions. And cold weather is great for this work.

Who We Are

Steve Young is the volunteer site leader who organizes these events. He is an Arlington County Park Steward and a certified Master Naturalist with the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN). Jennifer Soles is Arlington County's Invasives Coordinator who manages all of the county's invasives activities.

Contact Info

Steve Young, Frazmo@gmail.com ; cell 703-966-2966 .

Jennifer Soles, jsoles@arlingtonva.us ; work phone 703-228-1862 .

Detailed Directions to Us

If you have never been to Long Branch Nature Center before, getting there can be just a bit tricky. The site is in southwestern Arlington County. The mailing address is 625 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington VA 22206. Access is from S Carlin Springs Rd midway between Arlington Boulevard, U.S. Route 50 and Columbia Pike. Most navigation systems will get you close. Carlin

Springs Road goes down a hill to the Long Branch stream valley. At the bottom of the hill you will see a sign for 611 Northern Virginia Doctors Medical Center and you may also notice the sign for Long Branch Nature Center. Turn onto this access road (left turn if coming from Route 50/Arlington Blvd; right turn if coming from Columbia Pike). You will pass the medical office building on your left, then a parking garage also on the left (on weekends, this garage is an overflow parking option if the small nature center lot is full as sometimes occurs). The road becomes a semi-one-lane road, with pull-offs, that widens to the nature center parking lot in several hundred feet. We meet at this lot. If you are lost, see Steve Young contact info above.