



Volunteer Guidelines

Invasive Plant Removal Events

We're excited to have you on board to fight non-native, invasive plants in the Anacostia Watershed! If the butterflies and birds could speak, they'd thank you! Their habitat is being degraded by exotic plants from Europe and Asia. AWS is fighting back by uprooting such plants as Japanese stiltgrass, garlic mustard and English ivy at parks where valuable native plant species still exist. Our goal is to set up a great volunteer event—one that you'll enjoy, learn from, remain safe—and help move AWS stewardship projects forward.

IN PREPARATION...

Tips on Clothing:

We strongly recommend long pants, long-sleeved shirts, socks, and closed-toe shoes. This helps minimize skin exposure to poison ivy and ticks, which are found in most woods in the region. We highly recommend light-colored clothing, it'll be easier to spot ticks crawling on you! If you should inadvertently brush up against poison ivy, we'll have along a special washing agent marketed as "Tecnu" to treat affected skin. People highly allergic to poison ivy should think carefully before entering any wooded or weedy area in the Mid-Atlantic. Poison ivy is commonly found.

Tips on Deer Ticks:

For the foreseeable future, DC area volunteers should assume that all woods and weedy areas in the Metro area harbor deer ticks. These poppy-seed-sized arachnids (they are related to spiders and mites) can transmit Lyme Disease, and need to be taken seriously. We therefore recommend a four-fold line of defense, starting with tick education (see our deer tick hand-out). Next comes proper clothing, repellent, and checking our bodies thoroughly later in the day of the event.

CLEAN THE WATER, RECOVER THE SHORES, HONOR THE HERITAGE

Yellow Jackets: These are small (about 0.5”) black-and-yellow, ground-nesting wasps that can be aggressive if their nests are disturbed, delivering painful stings. If you are allergic to wasps or bee stings, make sure to bring appropriate medication recommended by your physician. Yellow jackets become more aggressive during the second half of the summer—July to September. If aggressive wasps are encountered in the field, we will vacate the area and move the work elsewhere.

Bug Repellant and Water: We recommend bringing along a repellant designed to repel both deer ticks and mosquitoes and a water bottle—particularly during the summer months

Field Information:

Sometimes volunteers get lost coming to an event. Sometimes they arrive late—after other volunteers have disappeared into the woods. We therefore like to equip volunteers ahead of time with the cell phone numbers of AWS field staff: Jorge Bogantes 202-560-6107; Lee Cain 301-768-0952; Ariel Trahan 989-450-6792.

Restrooms: ...are not always handy at the parks we work in. It is best to arrive “on empty.” (Bathrooms are present at Fort Dupont Park).

ALSO...

- AWS staff will ask that you sign a liability waiver form. If below 18 years, we need a parent to sign ahead of time. The easiest way to do this is by RSVPing online at our website in advance: <http://www.anacostiaws.org/calendar>
- All events are rain or shine, however some events might be cancelled due to extreme weather conditions, please contact us to confirm the day before or on the day of the event.
- AWS asks for a suggested minimum donation to help cover our administrative expenses of running the event.