

Local football team helps with invasive plant removal

- October 23, 2023



Volunteers pictured are, back row, from left: Friends of White's Woods President Sara King; Indiana County Crusader player Tony Parfitt; Jonathan Sprague; Somerville resident Jordan Stanko; and Crusader players Isaac Witmer and Ben Ellis. In the front row, from left, are: Crusader players Benjamin Rolley, Drew Rowland and Lucas Chambers; IUP graduate student in geography from Bakersville Joece Lynn and FWW Treasurer Tom Miller.

Submitted photo

Seven members of the Indiana County Crusaders, a Black Lick-based member of the Greater Eastern Football Association, helped remove 28 50-gallon trash bags of Japanese barberry Oct. 7 from White's Woods.

Crusaders coach Drew Rowland volunteered the group who showed up that morning ready to work with Friends of White's Woods members and other community volunteers.

Japanese barberry is an invasive species that crowds out the native plants important to the plant and animal life in White's Woods. Service vehicles carry barberry seeds into the woods on their tires, and walkers carry the seeds in on their shoe bottoms.

This fall, FWW has removed more than 85 bags of barberry from the woods. Bags are used to prevent the dropping of barberry seeds while removing invasives from the woods.

Members of the Crusaders who assisted are Benjamin Rolley, of Indiana, a fullback and linebacker; Rowland, of Black Lick, quarterback, running back, defensive end and coach; Lucas Chambers, of Indiana, offensive and defensive line; Tony Parfitt, of Harmarville, defensive line, co-owner; Jonathan Sprague, of Homer City, receiver and defensive back; Isaac Whitmer, of Black Lick, quarterback, receiver, defensive end; and Ben Ellis, of Ligonier, offensive line.

The GEFA is an eight-man semi-pro league in Pennsylvania that currently has 15 teams scattered throughout central, western and eastern Pennsylvania, from Somerset to Scranton, Berwick to Reading, Phillipsburg to Harrisburg, and now Black Lick.

If you and/or your organization can assist in barberry removal (one hour per week) in White's Woods, please email info@friends_ofwhiteswoods.org.