Friends of White's Woods recruiting volunteers for barberry removal

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Plant Patrol’s Ed Donley stood with a mound of barberry that was removed on Sept. 12. Submitted photo

Friends of White’s Woods is once again leading groups to remove invasive Japanese barberry from the White’s Woods Nature Center. The work started in late August and will continue into mid-November.

On Sept. 12 and 13, more than 70 people worked to pull, dig or chop out hundreds of the invasive plants, both large and small. Many of these participants were part of the fall 2026 Indiana University of Pennsylvania's "Into the Streets" event, an event designed to give IUP faculty, staff and students a chance to "build meaningful relationships with each other and community members while completing service projects."

IUP students from a wide array of undergraduate and graduate academic majors helped out, including students in graphic art, information sciences, nursing, speech therapy, psychology, interior design, biology, chemistry, and early childhood education.

The sorority Zeta Tau Alpha brought a number of members to help out on Saturday. The following day, the IUP Student Government Association pulled together over two dozen students for this work event.

The SGA is participating in FWW's "adopt-a-patch" barberry removal effort and have been working for two years to remove the barberry from a specific area in the Nature Center.

As in years' past, the community group Plant Patrol provided important assistance.

FWW identifies the work sites, provides group leaders, and distributes the gloves, tools, and reusable bags.

Most Saturdays, weather permitting, small groups of five to 15 work together to contain the invasive barberry. Collectively, the fall 2026 volunteers have logged nearly 170 work hours since August. Willing volunteers — either individuals or groups — are invited to contact FWW through the organization's website: https://www.friendsofwhiteswoods.org/.

White Township provides important support for this effort, supplying many of the tools, along with gloves, tarps and the reusable bags.