



Partners in Parks program

Long-term park project: Invasive plant species management

Neighbourhood groups may be interested in maintaining the biodiversity of Waterloo’s natural areas by managing the spread of invasive, non-native plant species.

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council’s “Best Management Practices” provide guidance for managing invasive plant species in Ontario. Through the Partners in Parks program, participants help manage the invasive plant species listed below through mechanical control measures (hand pulling, digging or cutting to ground level).



Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is a biennial herbaceous plant is especially troublesome in shaded habitats such as moist woodlands, waterways and disturbed areas along trails. A single garlic mustard plant is capable of populating a site by producing an average of 350 seeds, which remain viable in the soil for five years or more (Gavine, K.1995. *Natural Invaders – Invasive Plants in Ontario*. Federation of Ontario Naturalists).

This long-term project involves harvesting the plants from early May to June for a minimum five year term.



Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is an invasive perennial that spreads aggressively via its root system and degrades the quality of wetlands and waterways. Its strong root system can significantly damage infrastructure such as concrete or asphalt.

This long-term project involves harvesting the plants by cutting to ground level twice in spring, once in summer and once in fall, for a minimum five-year term.



Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* L.) is an invasive, non-native shrub or small tree in woodlands and open areas. Berries are spread by wildlife.

This project can take place as a one-time community stewardship activity or as a long-term project. Participants dig out small plants using a shovel or Extractigator tool. Optional: City may remove large trees and community groups use the solarization technique to cover stem with black silage tarp to prevent new shoots and install educational signage.



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The City staff liaison and project coordinator volunteers work together to determine the extent of the project, location, timing and method of removal.

During the initial workday, the City staff liaison will provide supplies, instruction and tool safety talk, remove harvested plants and monitor the activity to ensure tasks are completed safely and of the highest standard.



Responsibilities

For long-term park projects, two Partners in Parks Community Group Representative volunteers will be responsible for the following activities for a five year renewable term:

- hand-deliver educational material provided by the City to neighbouring residents surrounding the park area a week prior to the initial workday, as required
- schedule and monitor workdays throughout the growing season (prior to seed production) using participants' tools (see PIP guide for acceptable hand tools)
- engage community involvement; this activity is geared to ages 14 and up and those in good physical condition as moderate physical activity may be required such as bending, walking, digging and lifting up to 20 lbs
- ensure group participants are wearing personal protective equipment, have signed an Informed Consent Agreement and are directly supervised with suitable project tasks
- dispose of plant stems by bundling or depositing in the provided yard waste bags or other suitable containers, and remove from the site according to the Region of Waterloo's [household yard waste collection schedule](#) or contact your City staff liaison for large quantities

Next steps

Follow the community action process outlined in the Partners in Parks program guide. Initiate your project by completing the online project request form based on timelines.

For one-time events (Common buckthorn), Group leader completes online application form.

For long-term park projects:

- project coordinators review the Volunteer Position Description (PIP Community Group Representative) and complete the online volunteer application form and waiver; screening is required for projects involving group participants
- During a mandatory orientation session, the City staff liaison reviews the PIP Safe-work guidelines with project coordinator volunteers, who then signs a Partners in Parks agreement confirming your commitment to the project.