



Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

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a 501(c)3 non-profit conservation organization

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual restoration day cleans up more than invasives

RC&D and Wausau East make learning a service opportunity

Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc. and students from Wausau East high school came together on October 14th to battle against invasive shrubs on Fern Island, part of the beloved Oak Island complex in downtown Wausau.

This event marked the 11th year of battling invasive, non-native buckthorn and honeysuckle shrubs that used to cover the island. This year, the students' work was twice as valuable, also picking up lots of trash left exposed by low water levels in Lake Wausau. The lake level had been lowered this fall for dam repairs.

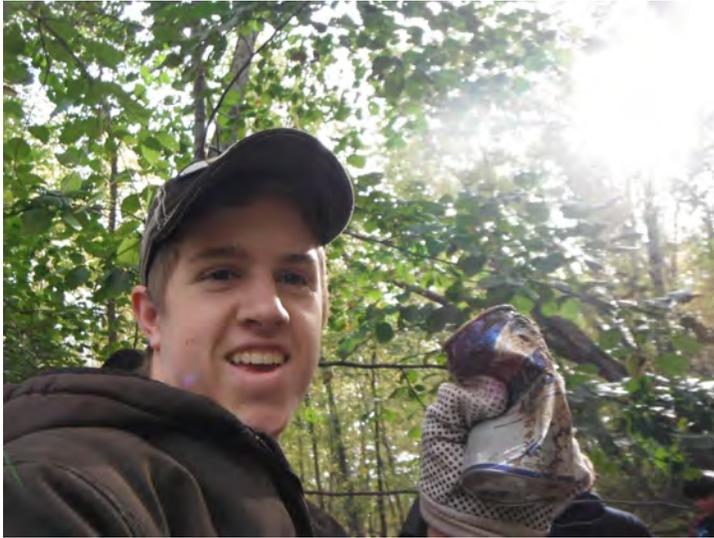


The low water levels also presented a unique opportunity for the students to work in sloughs on the island that would normally be too wet to access.

“We were finally able to get at some of those hidden peninsulas in the island,” said one volunteer who has helped student crews in past years, “we found a couple of dense patches that we never got to work on before.”

2016 work crew at Fern Island Invasive Species Field Trip.

Fern Island is part of Oak Island Park, located north of Thomas Street, on River Drive. The park includes floodplain forest habitat, a unique kind of wetland. It is made up of a variety of environments, both wet and dry, so many different species of plant and wildlife can be found in these ecosystems. Waterfowl, mammals, amphibians, songbirds, fish, insects, and reptiles all use these wetlands. Forest floodplains help people, too. They clean the water and are extremely important for managing floodwaters and reducing floods. When invasive plants take over, many of these important benefits are impacted.



Students learned how to identify and control non-native buckthorn and honeysuckle shrubs, and then put their skills to work on the island.

They also learned to identify some of the native shrubs that were rebounding where the invasives have been removed, such as red-osier dogwood and arrowwood. These native shrubs are more beneficial to birds and wildlife and are beautiful landscaping alternatives to their invasive

counterparts.

Got it! Students not only cleaned up invasive shrubs on the island, but lots of trash, too.

Sponsors and volunteers are being sought to support this community improvement event in 2017. If you would like to become a sponsor or volunteer, contact Amy Thorstenson at 715-343-6215 or amy.thorstenson@goldensandsrcd.org. No prior experience is needed to volunteer. All equipment is provided.

Golden Sands RC&D is organizing these work parties in partnership with the Wausau/Marathon County Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department. Funding support for the Fern Island Field Trip comes from a DNR AIS grant. Volunteer support came from the WI DNR and the Master Gardener Program.

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Golden Sands RC&D is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization formed in 1972. Our mission is to manage natural and human resources in ways consistent with sound conservation principles by working across county lines to address local concerns. Program areas include sustainable agriculture, clean water, abundant wildlife, and healthy forests. For more information about Golden Sands RC&D, visit www.goldensandsrcd.org.