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Sent: Tuesday, August 01, 2006 11:01 AM
To: pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu
Subject: PABIODIV: Weed Whacker Event in Blairsville

For Immediate Release August 1, 2006
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"Weed Whackers" needed to control invasive plants in Blairsville.

BLAIRSVILLE- Imagine a neighborhood where fellow community members have gathered to tackle the large, dense stalks of Japanese knotweed in order to create a more beautiful, open space for the public to enjoy.

Natural Biodiversity is looking for people who would like to work with nature and perform a public service by helping to control invasive plant species and beautify public areas in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin, by becoming "Weed Whackers." A mechanical control day is scheduled for August 5th at the proposed Hoodlebug Trail Extension in Wyotech Park, Blairsville.

On August 5th, volunteers will cut Japanese knotweed to beautify the areas and allow native plant regrowth. "Weed Whackers" clear knotweed, which hinders our view of and access to rivers and streams, from trails and river access points. Volunteers should meet at the entrance of Wyotech Park at 8:45 am. Follow 22W to the PA Route 217 exit to Blairsville, make a left onto Johnson Avenue after Sheetz, continue 1 block to stop sign, and then bear right down the hill. Wyotech Park will be on your right. Please watch for the orange "Weed Whacker" signs.

Invasive exotic plants are not native to the region and crowd out resident plants that cannot compete. Not only do invasive plants establish "monocultures," but they can increase soil erosion, reduce property values, and hinder recreational use of natural resources. Our Weed Whacker volunteers are very important and have a tremendous impact on knotweed control. A site that was cut and sprayed with herbicide one time had a 93.59% reduction in knotweed density in one year while a site that was sprayed twice in one year had a reduction of only 81% in two years. These statistics show that by cutting and spraying Japanese knotweed, a greater reduction in density occurs in half the time.

Based in Johnstown, Natural Biodiversity is a non-profit program sponsored by Westsylvania Heritage Corporation. Natural Biodiversity has been focused on conserving biodiversity in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin and all of southwestern PA since 2000. For six years, Natural Biodiversity has been working to control invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed, tree-of-heaven, crown vetch, and others with the support of local citizen action.

The August 5th work day will begin at 9:00 am and continue until 5 pm or until weather permits. Water, lunch and refreshments will be provided for the volunteers. Please RSVP to Margaret Speicher at (814) 532-5049, or mspeicher@naturalbiodiversity.org.

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve is intended to promote discussion of biodiversity issues in the state. It is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership (PBP) following guidelines posted at <http://www.pabiodiversity.org/listserve.html>. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the PBP. To unsubscribe, send the message UNSUBSCRIBE PABIODIV to majordomo@webmail.upb.pitt.edu.
