



Employment Resources Incorporated

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Local Students Help Clear Appalachian Trail

(Fredericksburg, VA) – Students from The Gladys H. Oberle School, a private school for at-risk youth in downtown Fredericksburg, participated in the *2nd Annual Appalachian Trail Invasive Species Field-Work Experience* project in Front Royal, Virginia on Tuesday, May 12. The second year event was conducted in partnership with the National Park Service to cut and uproot invasive plant species that grow along the famous Appalachian Trail in the Shenandoah Mountains.

“This year, we uprooted the invasive Mustard Garlic along the Appalachian Trail,” said Tricia St. Clair, Oberle’s Science Teacher and coordinator of the project. “Mustard Garlic was intentionally introduced by European Settlers to use as herbs and to help control erosion,” said St. Clair.

Other destructive non-native plants to the Appalachian Trail include Oriental Bittersweet, Phragmites, Mile-a-Minute Vine, Japanese Stiltgrass and Autumn Olive. “The experience has

been worthwhile in so many ways and the students are introduced to a new experience that is not only rewarding, but enjoyable,” said St. Clair. “They work together as a team to achieve a goal that could not be accomplished alone and leave the project feeling good about themselves and what they did for the environment.”

The Oberle student team worked under the supervision of James Akerson, Mid-Atlantic Exotic Plant Management Team Director for the National Park Service. Mr. Akerson works for the Biological Resource Management Division of the National Park Service. “Our students are excited to return to the Appalachian Trail again next year and work with Mr. Akerson and the National Park Service to continue cleaning up the trail,” said St. Clair.

Employment Resources Incorporated (ERI) is a private not-for-profit organization with offices located in Fredericksburg and Montross, Virginia that serves the city of Fredericksburg and multiple cities and counties in the Northern Neck and Rappahannock region. Its’ mission is to provide youth with the education and skills they need to become successfully employed, self-sufficient and contributing members of their community. ERI also provides employment training programs and services to the adult workforce and employers in their service region.

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