

Fighting invasive species in Caledon

Invasive species pose a growing threat to Ontario's biodiversity and cause millions of dollars in damage annually. There are more invasive species in Ontario than anywhere else in Canada, so it is a good thing that the Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) Hit Squad is working across the province again this summer to spread awareness about the impacts that invasive species are having on the environment, economy and society. One member of the squad is located in Caledon this summer. Locally, Cassie Weston is an Invasive Species Community Outreach Liaison, working with The Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).

?Invasive species pose a threat to the ecological integrity of the Bruce Trail,? Weston said. ?It is important to take preventative measures to limit the impact of invasive species on this beautiful trail system.?

OFAH partners with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to deliver the Invading Species Awareness Program. This program uses public education to prevent the introduction of new invasive species, and to stop the spread of those already here. Over the summer, the Invading Species Hit Squad, comprised of about 25 summer students, will monitor local lakes, waterways and forests, looking for zebra mussels, spiny water flea, round goby, giant hogweed, garlic mustard and other invaders. They will also be engaging their community to increase awareness of invasive species. Funding is being provided by the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs program.

The public is invited to contact Weston at 905-703-5811 or email her at caledon.outreach@gmail.com

To report a sighting of an invasive species, or request information materials, call the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, visit www.invadingspecies.com or EDDMapS.org/Ontario

