

Great Air Potato Roundup Great for Gainesville

by Ludovica Weaver, Morningside Nature Center

“Invasive exotic air potatoes can’t stay! We’ll round them all up and help G’ville that way!”

was the mantra on this year’s Great Air Potato Roundup tee-shirts that volunteers received at the post-roundup celebration. Indeed, despite cold and rainy weather on January 26th, 1,171 volunteers joined the crusade at 34 different natural areas throughout Gainesville to gather 15,740 pounds of air potatoes, 450 pounds of other invasive, exotic plants, and a 20 yard dumpster of trash. The pursuit of potatoes began at 9:00 am throughout Gainesville and lasted until 11:00 am, when potato gatherers gathered together at Morningside Nature Center for a celebration with music, food, tee-shirts and prizes.

Wonderful weather welcomed volunteers the weekend after the Great Air Potato Roundup for a mini-roundup where 67 volunteers worked at Loblolly Nature Park and a 24-acre natural area to remove another nine five-gallon buckets of air potatoes and several truckloads of trash.

The City of Gainesville’s Nature Operations Division wishes to thank the volunteers who participated in this year’s event and those who dedicate their time and efforts throughout the year to make a positive difference in Gainesville’s natural areas. Many sponsors, such as the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, also make the Great Air Potato Roundup possible. If you or your organization would like to take part in sponsoring this event, please contact Ludovica Weaver at City of Gainesville, Nature Operations Division, weaverl@cityofgainesville.org.



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