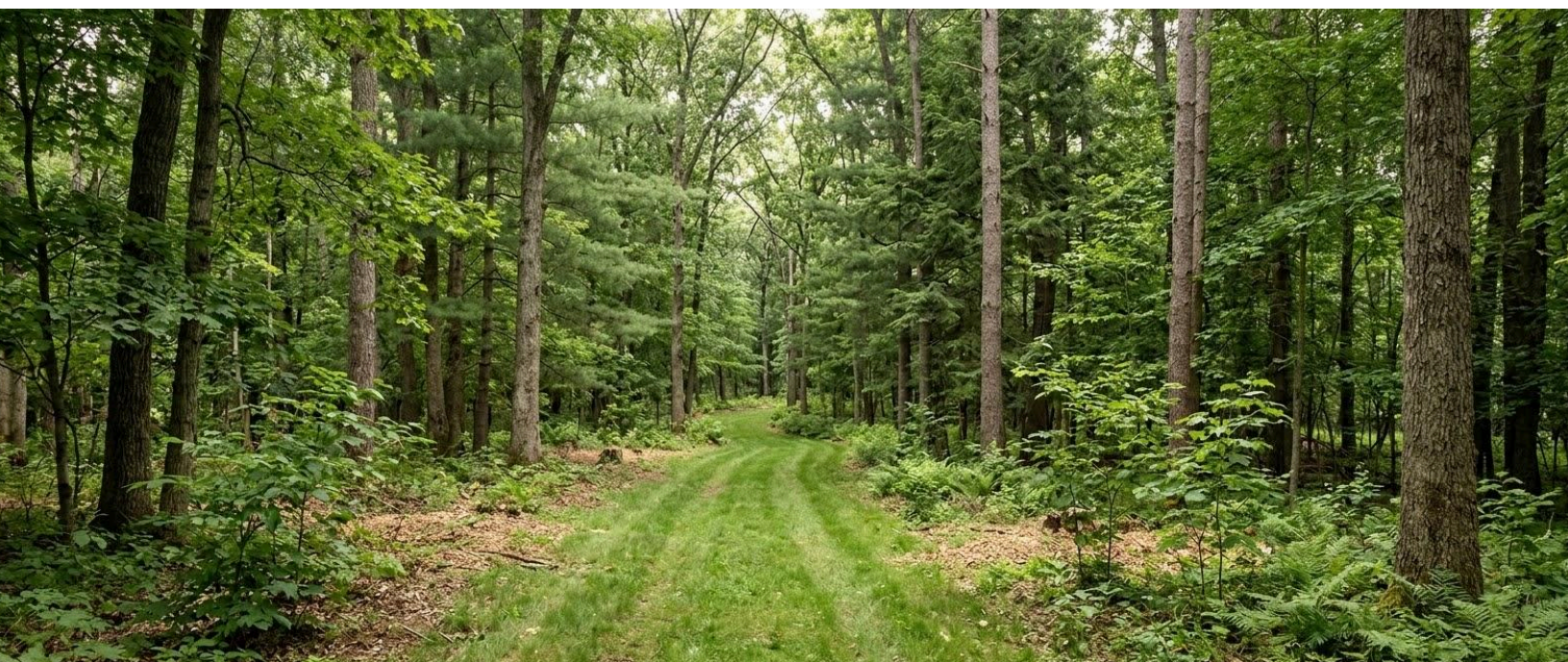


FRIENDS OF THE IMMANUEL FORESTS

Caring for the Woodlands of Immanuel Lutheran College & High School

OUR FORESTS

The forests on the Immanuel Lutheran College and High School campus are a remarkable natural resource. These wooded areas contain a diverse collection of trees and other plants, including red oak, white oak, burr oak, cherry, plum, chokecherry, apple, basswood, white pine, jack pine, fir, ash, alder, hackberry, chestnut, walnut, and others. At least 50 different types of flowering plants have also been documented.

Walking trails wind for approximately one to two miles through the forests, giving students, staff, visitors, and friends of Immanuel an opportunity to experience and enjoy this part of God's creation.

Maintaining a healthy forest, however, requires ongoing care. Invasive and encroaching species can prevent desirable native trees from thriving and can make the trail system increasingly difficult to maintain.

Friends of the Immanuel Forests is a volunteer effort established to help preserve and improve these wooded areas for the benefit of the Immanuel community and future generations.

WHY THE FOREST NEEDS OUR HELP

Over the years, selective cutting has been used to remove old trees and deadfalls and to open portions of the forest so that desirable trees can regenerate.

Two particularly aggressive species—**buckthorn and honeysuckle**—have established themselves in portions of the woods. Once established, these invasive plants spread rapidly and can crowd out desirable native vegetation.

Selective removal gives native broadleaf trees and white pines the opportunity to regenerate and grow. It also helps preserve access to the walking trails and maintain the health and diversity of the forest.

The long-term goal is not simply to remove vegetation, but to encourage a healthy woodland in which desirable trees and plants can flourish.

OUR LONG-TERM GOAL

Friends of the Immanuel Forests seeks to care for these wooded areas through thoughtful, selective management rather than wholesale clearing.

The continuing plan is to:

Remove invasive species. Control buckthorn, honeysuckle, and other plants that threaten desirable vegetation.

Encourage native growth. Give broadleaf trees, white pines, and other desirable species the space and sunlight needed to become established.

Maintain the trails. Keep the forest walking trails usable and enjoyable for the Immanuel community.

Monitor previously treated areas. Watch for regrowth and newly emerging invasive plants so that problems can be addressed while they are still manageable.

Preserve the forest for the future. Maintain a diverse, healthy woodland that students, faculty, families, alumni, and visitors can continue to enjoy.

UPCOMING PROJECT...VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SEPTEMBER 2026 - CUT AND DROP TEAMS

FOTF is scheduling short duration work events from **8:30 AM to 12:00 PM on September 5, 12, 19, and 26** for 'cut and drop' efforts within the forest. Cut and drop uses 2-person teams with one person cutting down the invasive and the other following immediately behind to spray the cut stump with root-killing herbicide. The cut material is left in place. No dragging brush, no chipping. This work is done where invasives are more widely spaced and of only moderate size.

If we had just two teams on each weekend, FOFT could cut and drop invasives in nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 29 acres of forest we are working on. Small efforts, huge impacts.

Contact Tom and Kyle if you're interested in volunteering for this effort. Their contact info is provided at the bottom of this webpage. They will answer any questions and put you on a contact list. We would only intend to perform work if weather conditions are decent.

OCTOBER 2026 - FOREST MULCHING OPERATIONS

There are significant areas of the forest where honeysuckle and buckthorn have completely taken over the forest creating dense thickets. FOTF determined the most effective and efficient way to restore those areas is to remove the invasives using a forest mulcher. A forest mulcher is a skidsteer with a front attachment that literally chews up standing forest, reducing it to shreds and chips.

FOTF successfully applied to a WI Department of Natural Resources grant program for invasive removal, set up for only private land owners under certain acreage. We received approval of the entire \$5000 we applied for. It is a 25% owner match so we have to provide \$1250 of our private funding to get a \$3750 WI DNR match. This \$5000 total will cover the costs to rent a skid steer with a forest mulcher for 7-days, 40-hours of run time.

The equipment will be operated by Kyle Scherberl or Tom Beekman. There may be some associated need for volunteer help to cut down some invasives that may be too large for the forest mulcher to remove in a time-efficient manner. Those larger trees will be hauled out via skid steer to selected locations on site where they will be burned this winter.

The private funding is currently covered by 50% private donors and 50% Immanuel funds. It would be great if we could get additional donations to cover the 50% Immanuel funds so they retain those funds for other uses.

PAST ACTIVITIES

MAY-JUNE 2026 Spraying

Monitoring of the area FOTF cut and removed invasives from in September, 2025 revealed the herbicide we used to spray the cut stumps to kill the root systems was 95% effective on buckthorn but less than 5% effective on honeysuckle.

Research indicates each species has its own unique self-preservation system when cut, and the one for honeysuckle blocked the specific herbicide used from entering the root system. A new herbicide was identified and applied to the re-growth sprouting from the cut stump and was 95-99% effective on its first application. Success!!

Additional testing was done with herbicide mixes for targeting seedling growth, primarily buckthorn which casts thousands of seeds each year. Testing found several mixes highly effective on killing the 1-4 ft seedlings. This is critically important as it will require a number of years of annual, surgical spraying of emergent seedlings to prevent re-growth of buckthorn into the forest.

June, 2026 'Cut and Drop'

Kyle Scheberl and Tom Beekman tried a new method for invasive removal they dubbed 'cut and drop'. This method operates as a 2-person crew with one person cutting down the invasive and the other person following immediately behind to spray the cut stump to kill the root system. The cut material is left in place to decay away into the forest ecosystem.

This method allowed the clearing of invasives from 4-5 acres of woods in only 3-4 hours of effort. Very effective, very efficient. It also leaves a very soft impact footprint on the surrounding forest.

This method is applicable in those areas where invasives are more widely spaced allowing access to each plant location without having to cut your way through a dense thicket of invasives or leave large piles of dead material behind in the forest.

It also lends itself to efficient forest mulching of the cut material at a later date if desired. One simply weaves from one dead pile to the next, reducing each to chips and leaving everything else untouched in that forest area.

**September 13–14,
2025**

Buckthorn and Honeysuckle Removal

The first major Friends of the Immanuel Forests volunteer effort concentrated on removing buckthorn and honeysuckle within approximately 10–15 yards of the forest walking trails.



Volunteers moved cuttings from the woods to the trail, where a commercial wood chipper was used to process the material. Chips were returned to the forest floor.

Herbicide was carefully applied to cut stumps to kill invasive root systems and reduce regrowth.

Experienced chainsaw operators handled the cutting of larger material, while other volunteers hauled brush, assisted with chipping, and helped with treatment of the cut stumps.

The project was organized so that material was removed and processed as work progressed rather than cutting more vegetation than could be handled while the chipper was on site.

Food was provided for the volunteer crew, including grilled hamburgers, brats, hot dogs, chips, and side dishes.

This initial project represented the first step in a longer-term effort to control invasive species and encourage the regeneration of desirable native trees.

GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in volunteering, supporting the project financially, or learning more about Friends of the Immanuel Forests, you can contact one of the leads for FOTF. Your name can be put on a FOTF contact list where you can be informed of any upcoming projects or other opportunities to support Immanuel FOTF.

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Preserving and caring for a beautiful part of God's creation at Immanuel Lutheran College & High School.
