

Werewolves in the Park? By Kai Artley Nathaniel

The end of January is much too late for red-and-green decorations to be on display and neighborhood volunteers worked to cure Deepdene Park of its inappropriate color scheme by removing nandinas and other invasive plants to make the park more welcoming for birds.

Twenty-seven volunteers worked on Saturday, January 28, to create a more bird-friendly habitat in the 22-acre Deepdene forest along Ponce de Leon Avenue. Guided by Walter Bland, a local native plant expert, the work crews targeted red-berried nandinas, waxy-leafed cherry laurels and spiky mahonias.

The neighborhood volunteers were joined by the Werewolf den of Cub Scout Pack 586. The ten second-grade boys were very adept at destroying invasive plants. "Cub scouts are very good at park clean-ups because we work so well together as a team," said Oliver Grosse of McLendon Ave.

OLPA organized the clean-up as part of a 5-star grant program from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Deepdene is one of three parks in the metro area selected by the Atlanta Audubon Society to be part of the bird habitat restoration program. The grant helps facilitate educational programs. OLPA hosted a bird walk through Deepdene on Feb. 25 and bird-banding demonstration on March 11. The bird-banding program will help researchers study native bird populations.

Kai Artley Nathaniel is almost eight-years old and member of Cub Scout Pack 586.