

INVASIVE HITCHHIKERS

Fact Sheet # 3

What ATV Riders Need To Know!

Invasive species are taking over parks and natural areas throughout Pennsylvania, making ATV riding difficult and damaging valuable habitat. Luckily riders can play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasives.

“Invasive species” are non-native plants and animals that can cause harm to the economy, environment and human health.

Invasive plants tend to grow quickly and thickly, potentially blocking trails. This makes it more difficult for people to ride ATVs and enjoy other

recreational opportunities.

Mile-a-minute, for example, is a vine that can grow up to a foot per day! It can quickly make trails impassable with its painful spines (*see photo below*).

Invasive species are also a concern to riders because they can ruin the beauty of Pennsylvania landscapes and lower biodiversity (the variety of living things in an area).

We need biodiversity to maintain healthy habitats. Plus it's simply more interesting and exciting to ride through a



landscape full of different shrubs, trees, flowers, and grasses, rather than through a boring field of the same invasive plant. But that is exactly what could happen if an invasive species appears... all other species, including wildlife, may be chased out!



Make A Difference!

Now that you know why invasive species are a concern, what can you do to help minimize their spread? Luckily there are many small, easy steps you can take to keep invasives in check.

- Know how to identify some of the more common invasive species in your area, so you can avoid riding through them. Visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm to learn more.
- To avoid disturbing soil, which can spread invasives, stick to designated trails.
- Clean off clothing, shoes, and vehicles before leaving an area. Bag any dirt, seeds, and other plant parts. Dispose of this in the trash.
- Volunteer to help prevent and control invasive species. Contact your local state park or forest office, conservation district or ATV club to get involved.



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