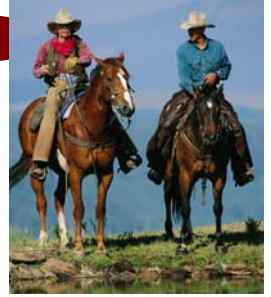


What Horseback Riders Need To Know!



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

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

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

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 or killed!



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 common invasives in your area, so you can avoid riding through them. Visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/index.htm to learn more.
- Don't move firewood! Buy it locally. This will keep out invasive insects like emerald ash borer.
- Volunteer to help prevent and control invasive species. Contact your local state park/forest office, conservation district, watershed group, or equestrian club to get involved.
- Stick to designated roads and trails instead of blazing your own.
- Use proper mane and hoof grooming techniques to remove hitch-hiking seeds and plant parts before going to a new area. Also clean off clothing, shoes, packs, and equipment. Bag any dirt, seeds, and hair and properly dispose of this in the trash.

