

# What Bikers Need To Know!



Invasive species are taking over parks and natural areas throughout Pennsylvania, making it more difficult to ride bikes, and damaging valuable habitat. Luckily bikers 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 create a challenge for those that maintain trails, and makes it more difficult for people to ride bikes 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 bikers 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!



**Mile-a-minute vine**

- 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/invasivetutorial/index.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/index.htm) to learn more.
- Minimize stream crossings to prevent the erosion of stream banks.

## 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.

- To avoid disturbing soil, which can spread invasives, stick to designated trails.
- Clean off bike tires, clothing, shoes, and other equipment before going to a new area. Bag any dirt, seeds, and other plant parts and properly dispose of this in the trash.
- Volunteer to help prevent and control invasive species. Contact your local state park/forest office, conservation district, watershed group, or bike club to get involved.

