

5/12/02

*Policy on Invasive Exotic Species*

The Appalachian Trail Conference and its member clubs recognize the potentially adverse impacts of invasive exotic plant and animal species upon the ecosystems through which the Trail passes. Proliferation of these species may significantly alter the natural communities along the Trail and threaten biodiversity.

Exotic species are defined as species, either plant or animal, that occur in a given place outside of their native ranges as a result of human actions. Exotic species that pose a threat to the native species of the area they occupy are considered invasive.

The Conference will work to manage invasive exotics in cooperation with its agency partners, trail maintaining clubs, and other interested groups. This effort will include the following elements:

- Education-ATC will incorporate information on invasive exotic species and the threats they present into its public-information efforts. As part of this effort, the Conference will seek to raise the collective awareness of its members, volunteers, and staff regarding the potential harm caused by invasive exotic species, their rate of expansion, and methods that can be employed to control them effectively.
- Monitoring-The occurrence and spread of invasive exotic species will be monitored as resources permit. Priority will be given to those areas where threatened and endangered species are at risk and in natural communities that are most vulnerable to invasion.
- Control- To the extent feasible, invasive exotic species will be controlled with priority given to those areas (1) where invasive exotic species have the potential to do the greatest harm, and (2) where actions to control invasive exotic species will do the greatest good and have the highest likelihood of success. Control methods will utilize the best scientific management practices available and will not be implemented until approvals have been obtained from appropriate land management and regulatory agencies. Control methods that have adverse impacts on nontarget species will only be used where there is a clear, long-term benefit to the natural community or its component species.