

Running Head: Relationship Between Trail Construction...

The Relationship Between Trail Construction and Invasive Species in Nature Preserves

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1 August 2014

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**Abstract:**

Almost all nature preserves have walking trails for the public to use. However, when people are making use of these trails, they may also be destroying the very thing they visited park or preserve to see: nature. Unsuspecting trail travelers may be carrying the spores or seeds of invasive plants that compete with native plants for natural resources. A field botany class collected plant data from all over North Carolina, on which various analyses were performed. One study compared the abundance of invasive species in areas with trails to areas with little to no human contact in an attempt to show that human disturbance leads to the introduction of harmful invasives. It was determined that the data supported the hypothesis that human impact affects the number of invasive species.