



## Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

### SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: MILE-A-MINUTE

Mile-a-minute (*Polygonum perfoliatum*) is an herbaceous, annual, trailing vine. It can be easily identified by recurved barbs or prickles on the stems and undersides of leaves. The light green colored leaves are shaped like a triangle and the clusters of berry-like fruits are a brilliant blue when ripe (Fig. 1). Mile-a-minute grows very fast



Fig. 1 Photo by: Leslie J. Mehrhoff

and can shade and weigh-down existing vegetation, thus blocking life-giving sunlight from reaching the plants and shrubs beneath. Native to Asia, seeds of this species were mistakenly brought to the United States by the nursery industry in the late 1930's. The plant was allowed to reproduce and subsequent eradication efforts were unsuccessful. Mile-a-minute is now found in almost every northeastern state as well as West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina.

**Wild buckwheat, a non-native vine, is commonly misidentified as mile-a-minute. It lacks the recurved barbs or prickles and has heart-shaped leaves.**

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

In May 2008, the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network (ERMN) vegetation monitoring crew began searching for priority invasive plants and pests during routine monitoring activities at ERMN parks. Knowledgeable monitoring crew members provide additional “eyes and ears” to detect incipient species occurrences while in the parks. Park natural resource managers, Exotic Plant Management Teams, and other National Park Service scientists also participate.

**Biological control is defined as “the reduction of pest populations by natural enemies and typically involves an active human role.”**

-- Cornell University

### WHAT WE ARE FINDING

During invasive species early detection surveillance monitoring in 2010, three new invasive plant occurrences and two species were documented at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation area (DEWA): mile-a-minute (*Polygonum perfoliatum*) and linden arrowwood (*Viburnum dilatatum*). In August and September, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in collaboration with DEWA resource managers, released 5000 Chinese weevils (*Rhizoncomimus latipes*) [Fig. 2], a biological control agent, at two new mile-a-minute sites along the Dingmans Ferry Rivershore Natural Heritage Site (NJ). These weevils, which only feed on mile-a-minute, will help to control the spread of this vine by feeding on the stem and leaves, preventing seed formation, and stunting growth. Small plants may even be killed! For more information on mile-a-minute and the Chinese weevil, contact the Invasive Species Early Detection Coordinator (ISED) or Jeff Shreiner, DEWA biologist, at [jeffrey\\_shreiner@nps.gov](mailto:jeffrey_shreiner@nps.gov). In addition, multiple linden arrowwood shrubs were detected at one site along Milford Beach road and treatment is planned for 2011.



Fig. 2

Cornell University. nd. Biological Control: A Guide to Natural Enemies in North America. <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/biocontrol/index.php> (Accessed 1/26/2011).

Fig. 2: Ellen Lake, University of Delaware, Bugwood.org

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