



<p><b>WORKING PROJECT TITLE</b></p>	<p>Biological Invasions in protected areas: Recreational users as introduction pathways into Table Mountain National Park</p>
<p><b>CORE TEAM MEMBER</b></p>	<p>Prof Tamara Robinson-Smythe</p>
<p><b>COLLABORATORS</b></p>	<p>Dr Nicola van Wilgen (SANParks) Dr Sabrina Kumschick (CIB) Dr Katelyn Faulkner (SANBI)</p>
<p><b>ACADEMIC LEVEL OF THE PROJECT</b></p>	<p>MSc</p>
<p><b>PROJECT BACKGROUND</b></p>	<p>Invasive species are an increasing threat to the ecosystem services enjoyed by recreational users of protected areas, but little is known about recreational users' perception of invasions and their potential role in facilitating them. Recent literature has identified recreational users of national parks as potential vectors for invasive species. This poses a biosecurity risk for South Africa's Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) which supports many threatened endemic flora. TMNP is unusual as much of the park is open access offering a porous boundary. Trail-runners, dog walkers and horse riders frequent the park, and could be vectors of introduction and dispersal for invasive species.</p> <p>This exciting project will involve interviewing recreational users at boundary control points and within the park, to ascertain what the level of understanding they have of invasions. The project will also involve field-based screening of recreational users (e.g. trail shoes, bicycle tyres) and their animals (dogs, horses) for alien plant propagules. This project will culminate in recommendations to park authorities on how best to manage this potential source of alien propagules.</p>
<p><b>LENGTH OF PROJECT/FUNDING (IF FUNDED)</b></p>	<p>The running costs for the project are fully funded. The successful applicant will be supported in applying for</p>



	NRF, SANBI, Stellenbosch University and departmental bursaries.
<b>REQUIREMENTS</b>	<p>BSc Honors degree in ecology or equivalent 4-year degree in relevant field</p> <p>Understanding of invasion biology, especially pathways</p> <p>Excellent data management and analytical skills</p> <p>Proficient in Excel and R</p> <p>Excellent verbal and written communication skills</p> <p>Good people skills and a willingness to engage with strangers</p> <p>Willingness to travel and a valid driver's license</p> <p>Not afraid of dogs or horses</p>
<b>FURTHER READING</b>	<p>Smith K, Kraaij T (2020) Research note: Trail runners as agents of alien plant introduction into protected areas. <i>Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism</i> 31: 100315, doi: 10.1016/j.jort.2020.100315</p> <p>Turbelin AJ, Diagne C, Hudgins EJ, Moodley D, Kourantidou M, Novoa A, Haubrock PJ, Bernery C, Gozlan RE, Francis RA, Courchamp F (2022) Introduction pathways of economically costly invasive alien species. <i>Biological Invasions</i> 24(7): 2061-2079, doi: 10.1007/s10530-022-02796-5</p> <p>Pickering, C. (2022). Mountain bike riding and hiking can contribute to the dispersal of weed seeds. <i>Journal of Environmental Management</i>, 319, 115693.</p>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS OF CORE TEAM MEMBER</b>	<p>Visit the Centre for Invasion Biology's website (<a href="https://blogs.sun.ac.za/cib/">https://blogs.sun.ac.za/cib/</a>) to find out more about the Centre and contact Prof Tammy Robinson-Smythe at <a href="mailto:trobins@sun.ac.za">trobins@sun.ac.za</a></p> <p>When applying please include your CV and a motivation for why you are suited to this position.</p>



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Please be prepared to provide the details of a past supervisor as one of your references.