

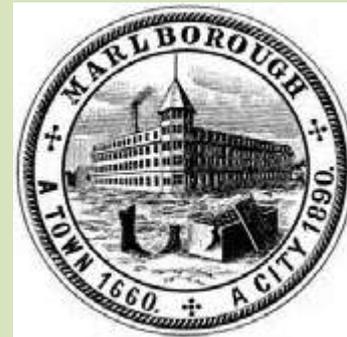
Desert Natural Area Memorial Forest Pitch pine-scrub oak restoration project

Sudbury & Marlborough

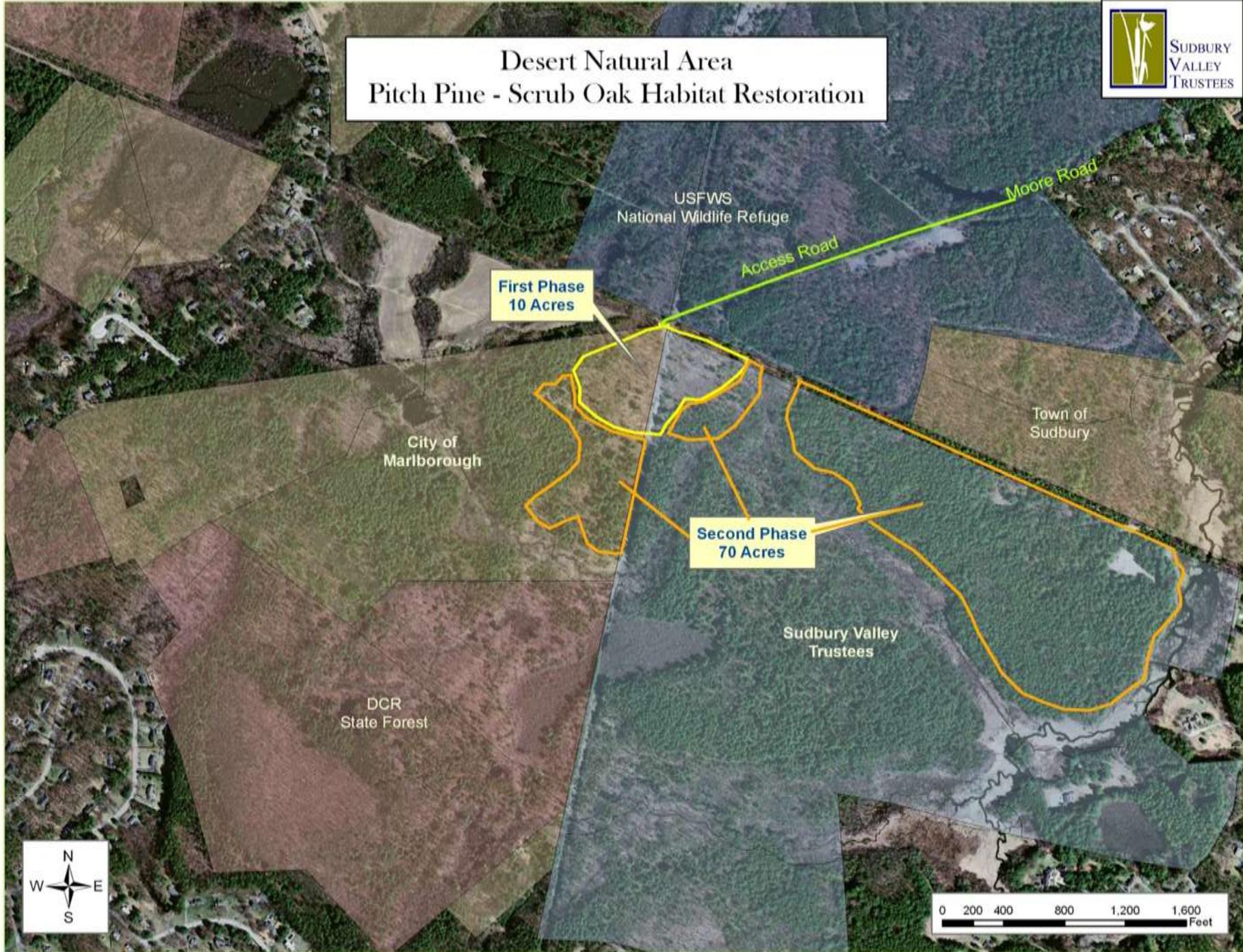
Sudbury Valley Trustees



City of Marlborough



Desert Natural Area Pitch Pine - Scrub Oak Habitat Restoration



Partnership

Cooperating to manage habitat

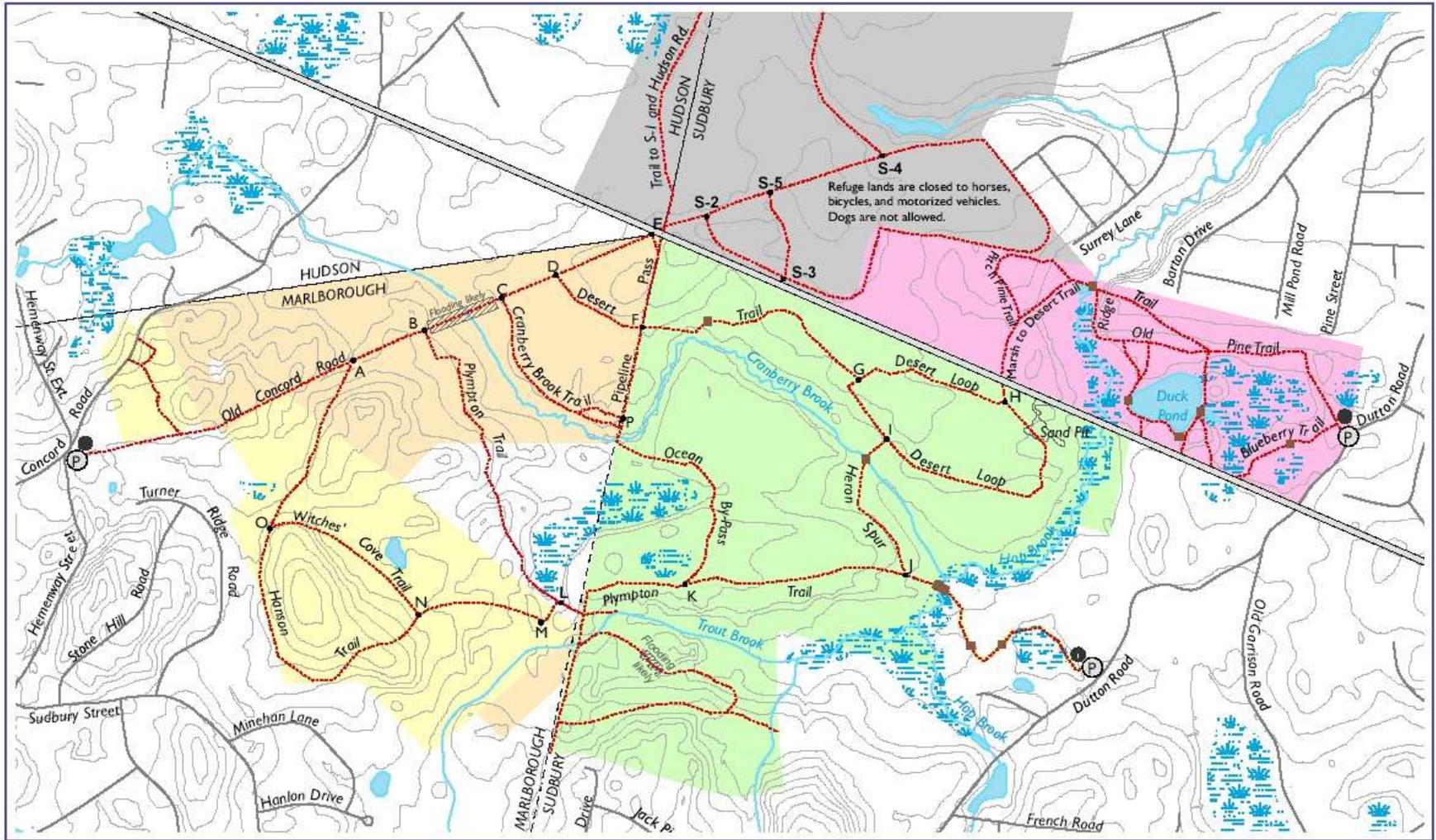
- Sudbury Valley Trustees;
- City of Marlborough;
- MassWildlife NHESP
- USFWS Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge
- Town of Sudbury;
- Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts;
- Department of Conservation and Recreation

Planning began in February 2009

Burn occurred in May 2014

Desert Natural Area

900 Acres south of Hudson Road
3,000 additional Refuge acres to the north



Project Goals

- Restore ~100 acres
Pitch Pine - Scrub Oak Barrens
- Provide habitat for rare and declining species



Habitat for Birds:

Whip-poor-will, Eastern towhee,
brown thrasher, prairie warbler



Habitat for insects, lupine and turtles:

Frosted elfin, barrens buckmoth, barrens tiger beetle



Forest Stewardship Plans

With funding from the DCR Forestry Program

Forest Stewardship Plans were prepared for

- **Marlborough - Desert Natural Area:**
- **Sudbury -SVT's Memorial Forest**
- **Sudbury – General Federation of Women Clubs**
- **Sudbury - Hop Brook Conservation Area.**

Funding

Project supported by grants from:

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative (*CISMA effort*)
- USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation Forest Stewardship Program
- MassWildlife Landowner Incentives Program (LIP)
- Sudbury Foundation (Phase II)

Not all groups were eligible for all of these funds so we had to work cooperatively and be creative.

Education and Outreach (Early and Always)

- **Project web site**
- Kiosk information at two locations
- Letters to all abutters (twice)
- Guided walks of the area
- Handing out information at trail heads
- Public informational meetings
- Library displays
- **Email notification list**



Steps to a prescribed fire for habitat restoration

1. Set Project Goals
2. Walk site with experts early in process
3. Seek funding to do the work
4. Prepare Forest Stewardship Plan
5. Engage stakeholders throughout process: town & city government, local land trusts, public
6. **Inform and engage Fire Depts. & local fire warden**
7. Prepare Prescribed Fire Plan
8. Hire a burn boss Implement the plan: first cut-masticate, then burn
9. Pre and post burn monitoring

Woodland Before



Woodland Before



After Mowing/Mastication



Mastication needs to be specific for burn to work



After cut and before burn- Summer 2013



The Burn...



Burn boss is in charge on the day of the burn

May 7, 2014



Pre burn day & Burn Day Logistics

- City/town officials and fire departments on notice
- Abutters notified
- Signage posted at all trail entrances
- Trails blocked to management unit
- Reps posted at trail closures to inform public
- Burn Boss provides prep to fire crew and organization/municipal staff
- Always plan for contingencies (in Burn Plan)

MetroWest Daily News & Local cable station were on site and did great publicity



Credit: Art Illman/courtesy
MetroWestDailyNews.com

The second half of the day the fire burned hotter and faster...



Credit: Art Illman/courtesy
MetroWestDailyNews.com

Report to public on web site after the burn...

Current Project Status

We had a very successful burn. Joel Carlson, of Northeast Forest & Fire Management, led an 11 member crew. The crew included Tom Muise, DCR District Fire Warden and two Marlborough fire fighters. Two Sudbury fire fighters assisted with support outside of the burn unit.

In and around the site on the day after the burn, we had many happy birds, including Eastern towhee and prairie warbler - two of our target species! At least one whip-poor-will has been active nearby - undoubtedly this restoration will bring in more. Black racer snakes, denning right next to the burn unit, seemed to be completely unperturbed, coming and going from their den and sunning themselves.

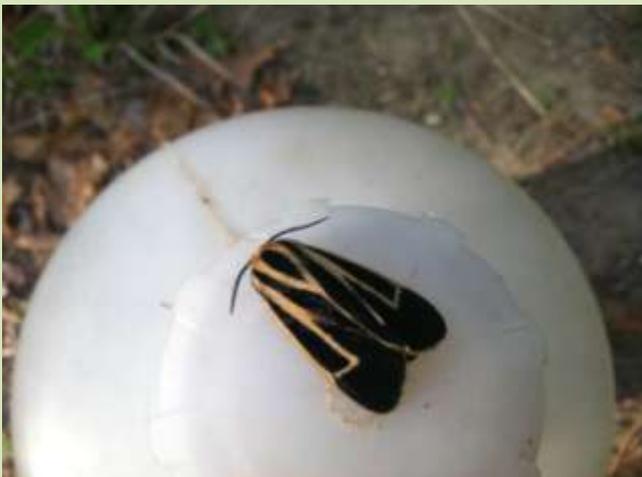






Project Evaluation

- Breeding bird surveys
- Insect surveys
- Vegetation monitoring
- Photo point monitoring



Birds Arrive Quickly!



Photo: Craig Smith



Photo: Greg Lasley



Photo: Dennis Boulton



Photo: Lloyd Spitalnik

Next Steps

