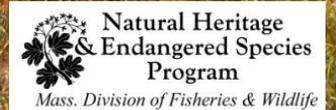
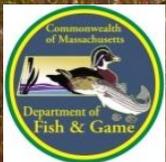


Land Legacy & Key Sites: Protecting our Investment in Public Land

Restoration & Management

Stewardship



**Land Legacy & Key Sites:
Protecting Our Investment in Public Land**

- The Commonwealth has invested millions of dollars in highly successful land protection programs. Now, we must protect that investment in public land through a long-term commitment to (1) habitat restoration and management and (2) basic stewardship.
- Every day, the Commonwealth's irreplaceable natural areas, and state-owned forests, parks, and Wildlife Management Areas are increasingly threatened by invasive species, disruption of natural processes such as fire, and climate change.
- Like bridges, roads, and other infrastructure, public land must be maintained—otherwise we risk losing the ecological, scenic, and recreational values of the land we purchased at considerable public expense.
- The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, the Department of Fish & Game, and the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife have embarked on an ambitious new initiative to protect our investment in public land by committing resources and staffing to habitat restoration and basic land stewardship. During FY14-15, in the largest effort of its kind undertaken by our agency, hundreds of acres of habitat are being restored on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's), and basic stewardship such as boundary marking is being completed.
- The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program's Key Sites Analysis is providing a scientific basis for setting management priorities—from the sandplain grasslands, pine barrens, and coastal plain ponds of the southeast, to the calcareous fens, bogs and high-altitude forests of the Berkshires.
- Management of Key Sites can bring immediate results; state-listed Whip-poor-wills have recolonized large portions of Montague WMA in response to recent management, and we have successfully established a robust population of the federally listed plant, Sandplain *Gerardia* at restored grassland on Frances Crane WMA.
- A sustainable program will continue to require funding from a variety of sources; operational, capital, grants, and other sources.
- Land protection is a critical—and costly investment. Yet as any homeowner knows, acquiring a resource is not enough. We must renew our commitment to maintenance and stewardship of public open space if we are to protect our investment for future generations.