



Cape May Point State Park Forest Restoration Project

New Jersey Audubon Society, 2014



The lower Cape May Peninsula is a world-recognized critical stopover site for major concentrations of migrating birds, many of which rely on the forest for stopover habitat during migration. The NJ State Wildlife Action Plan lists Cape May Point State Park as one of the most important conservation areas on the Cape May Peninsula. In early 2011, New Jersey Audubon began a 5.5-acre forest restoration project in cooperation with Cape May Point State Park.



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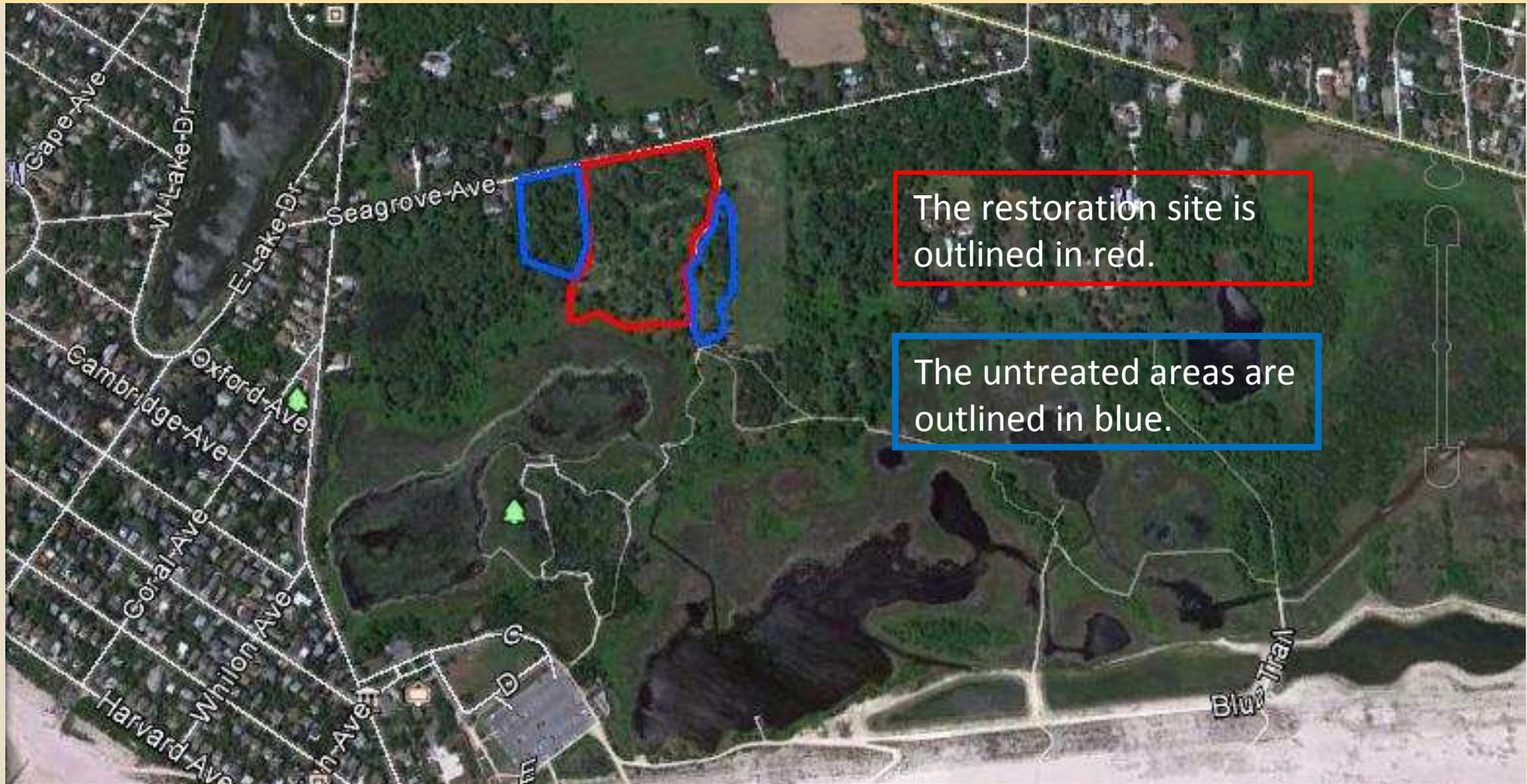


Both the New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan and the New Jersey Audubon Important Bird Areas Program have identified degradation of natural communities by invasive species as a primary threat in Cape May. At Cape May Point State Park the problem is particularly severe, with introduced vine species forming a blanket of invasive vines over the tops of mature trees, killing the trees and prohibiting the establishment of native vegetation species.



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The restoration site is outlined in red.

The untreated areas are outlined in blue.

The following photo essay shows progress of the project over time, comparing the condition of the treated restoration site to two adjacent untreated sites. The photos show great progress in controlling these vines, but also demonstrate the need for continued work in order to avoid losing the gains that have been made at the site thus far.



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July 27, 2012 - Untreated area adjacent to restoration site, blanketed by invasive vines. This is similar to the condition of the restoration site before treatments began, except that the restoration site contained taller, more mature trees blanketed by vines.



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Early 2011 - A photo of the initial forestry-mowing operation at the restoration site.



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Early 2011 - immediately after the initial forestry mowing operation.



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July 27, 2012 - Cape May Forest restoration site in second year of treatment, with significant native understory regeneration.



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May 31, 2013 – Native plants are continuing to regenerate in the treated area



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May 31, 2013 – Volunteers help pull the invasive clematis vine; however, significant native regeneration can be seen in this photo.



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July 23, 2013 - The restoration site has large stands of pokeweed and other native plants.



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September 10, 2013 - This slide shows dramatic differences between the restoration site (on left) and the adjacent untreated site (on right). At the site on the left, clematis was sprayed with herbicide on August 23, 2013. This was the third annual herbicide treatment at this site, and the site has been mowed twice. The brown vegetation on the left is dead clematis. The site on the right is outside of our restoration site and has not been treated aside from one forestry mowing treatment in early 2011. The white flowers on the right are the abundant flowers of the invasive clematis vine.



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September 10, 2013 – Treated site



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September 10, 2013 – Treated site



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September 10, 2013 – Untreated site. The white is the flowers of the invasive clematis vine.



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September 10, 2013 - Treated site. Because clematis remains at the restoration site, some of the native vegetation could not be protected and was affected by the herbicide.



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September 10, 2013 – Treated site



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September 10, 2013 - Untreated site. The white is the flowers of invasive clematis vine.



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September 10, 2013 - Treated site. The brown vegetation is clematis. Much of the remaining green clematis continued to brown up over the course of the following weeks. This photo shows that continued control efforts are necessary at this site. Note, however, that possibly due to the stress of annual mowing and chemical treatments, clematis has been largely prevented from flowering at this site, while it is in full bloom at the adjacent untreated site.



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September 10, 2013 - Untreated site. The white is the flowers of invasive clematis vine.



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September 10, 2013 - Untreated site. The white is the flowers of invasive clematis vine.



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December 12, 2013 - Treated area. The red circle shows persisting invasive clematis. However, the green trees in this photo are pines.



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December 12, 2013 - Adjacent untreated area. The green on the trees is a blanket of invasive vines.



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December 12, 2013 - Treated area. The flattened stems on the ground are mainly native pokeweed stems.



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December 12, 2013 - Adjacent untreated area. Trees and shrubs are blanketed in invasive clematis vines.



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December 12, 2013 - Treated area. Flattened stems of native pokeweed are evident here, but the green foliage on the ground is remaining invasive clematis, demonstrating the need for continuing control efforts.



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December 12, 2013 - Adjacent untreated area. Trees and shrubs are blanketed in green invasive vines.



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December 12, 2013 - This treated area was once covered in clematis but now has significant native herbaceous cover, including goldenrods, asters, and ragweed.



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December 12, 2013 – This adjacent area is outside of our project area. It was forestry mowed once in 2011, but no additional follow-up treatments were performed after that time. The green in the lower portion of the photo is all invasive clematis.