Field Restoration Test Plots

Test Plot at Smith-Andover Field

Smith-Andover is one of our field restoration test sites, with the other being at Poison Ivy Field at Sandy Pond Trust. We are testing two techniques of field restoration to determine which method is most effective at suppressing invasive vegetation while supporting the return of field biodiversity.

We are testing two restoration techniques at each site.

The first technique involves an initial mowing of a 40'x40' square followed by the removal of the sod layer using the power rock rake attachment on our tractor. With the sod layer removed, the area was seeded in the spring using a mixture of native warm season grass mix and conservation/ wildlife mix from New England Wetland Plants INC. The sod layer that was removed contained mostly glossy buckthorn root balls, which were dispersed throughout the field (the root balls are inert and will not reestablish themselves). This plot will be monitored throughout the Summer and Fall to see how well the seed mix takes and what type of vegetation returns.

The second test plot follows the initial establishment of a 40'x40' square followed by monthly low mowing of the plot and continued monitoring to note what type of vegetation returns between mowing cycles. At the end of the season in November (possibly early

December before the ground freezes / snows) we will use the power rock rake to remove the sod layer and add the same type of seed mix to the site to overwinter.

The ultimate goal of this experiment would be to identify a process of restoration that is effective at suppressing invasives and encouraging the return of native species, while being easily reproduced and expanded on from season to season with our current equipment and budget.

Test plot at Poison Ivy Field