



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry
Hazard Fuels Management 2009-2012

Initiative: Hazard Fuels Management and Ecosystem Restoration in Southeast Massachusetts

Situation: Southeastern Massachusetts is one of the most wildfire-prone sections of the US. Unmanaged, highly flammable fuels have steadily accumulated in the pitch pine and scrub oak forests that are common to the region.



Fuel Load: heavy, thick, dense; often grows right up to homes and out buildings;
Fuel Type: scrub oak, pitch pine, resin filled flora; highly volatile

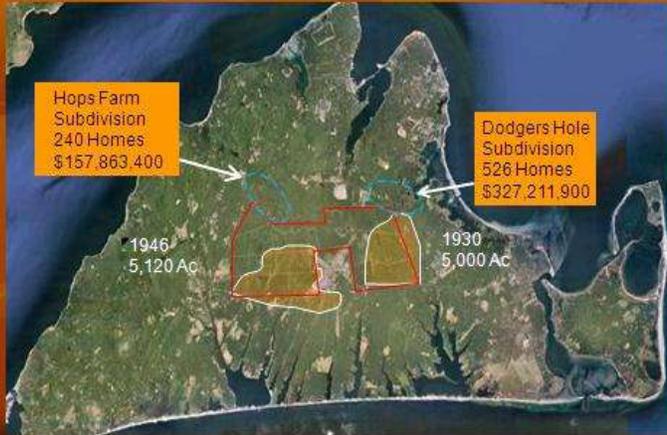


A not uncommon driveway: heavy fuel load and volatile fuel type follows drive up to home

Using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funding, the DCR Forest Fire Control is reducing hazardous fuels by using mechanical treatments and prescribed fire. The project has also created public awareness about the complexity of managing forest fuels and is helping people in the wildland urban interface (where forests and human settlements meet) understand ecosystem-based fire hazard mitigation issues and how to reduce the risk of wildfires. Treatment and management of these highly volatile fuels in the SE Massachusetts pine barrens is helping to:

- Reduce the number and size of wildfires
- Reduce property losses
- Increase the use of prescribed fire as an effective tool for lowering fire risk
- Develop the public's appreciation for the science of fuels management
- Create adequate firebreaks and safety zones to protect surrounding communities and suppression forces
- Achieve the desired future condition

Vineyard Fire History



Real estate values, Manuel Correllus State Forest outlined in red, lighter plots depict old fire footprints from large burns (dated with acreage)

Action and Resolution:

Brief Fire History ~ Martha's Vineyard

1875	7-10,000 Ac	Quompacha Bottom
1909	10,000 Ac	Plains
1916	12,000 Ac	W. Tisbury to Farm Neck
1927	6,400 Ac	Dr. Fisher Road
1935	4,000 Ac	Edgartown to Katama
1939	4,000 Ac	Quompacha Bottom
1946	5,120 Ac	Tisbury Great Pond
1965	1,200 Ac	Great Plains to Katama

Treatment Areas:

Dodgers Hole, Edgartown
Hopps Farm, West Tisbury

Hazard Fuels Reduction

- Prescribed fire
- Mechanized mowing

Ecological Restoration

- Maintains and improves habitat quality
- Shrub lands are the most important natural community for rare and endangered Lepidoptera (moth & butterflies) in MA
 - ❖ 41% of State listed moths and butterflies associated with shrub land barrens
- Fire is a natural disturbance; it is a preferred method of habitat management in fire-adapted communities

Fire Training: hands on acquired knowledge:

- DCR and local Fire Departments // Prescribed Burning is a valuable fire training tool
 - ❖ Most local firefighters have never seen the potential fire behavior produced by this forest type
- Fire Behavior
- Tactics
- Equipment



Before Fire Treatment



After Fire Treatment

Project Deliverables: 6 CWPPs; Firewise programs; fuel management partnerships with state, local and federal entities; 61 Hazard Fuel Mitigation Projects consisting of 1,488.60 total acres burned on state and partnership lands, and 688 acres mechanically treated on state lands.

Future Plans: repeat action and maintenance of work already done

For a more detailed report on ARRA funded fuel management and ecosystem successes in the Southeast Massachusetts area go to: [SE_Massachusetts](#)