

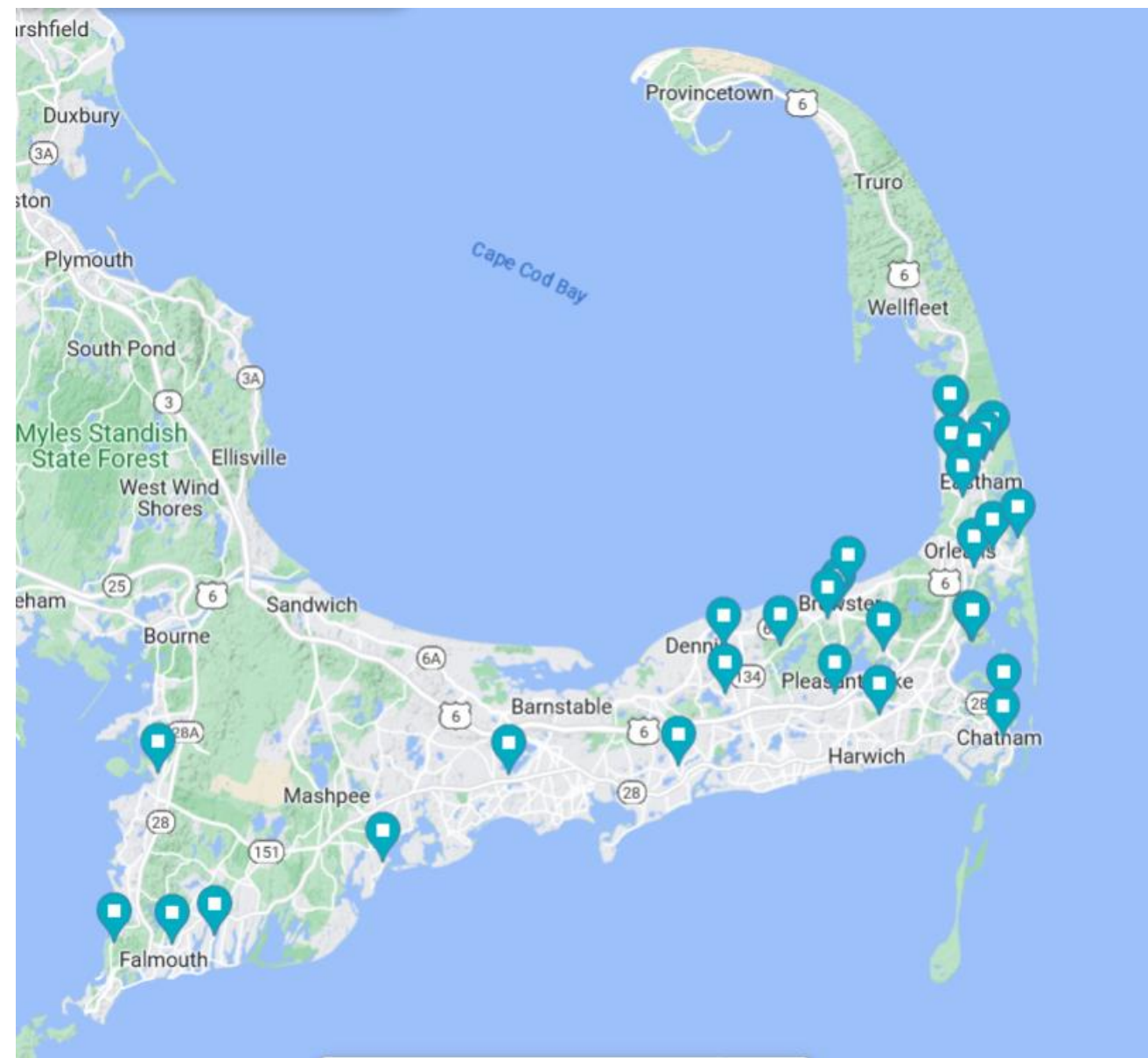


PLANTING A SEED

End of the Season Summary for the APCC's Eco-Audit Team

Ben Silverstone, Hailey Philbrick, & Aly Milando







how to make my yard sustainable



Images

At home

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Finance

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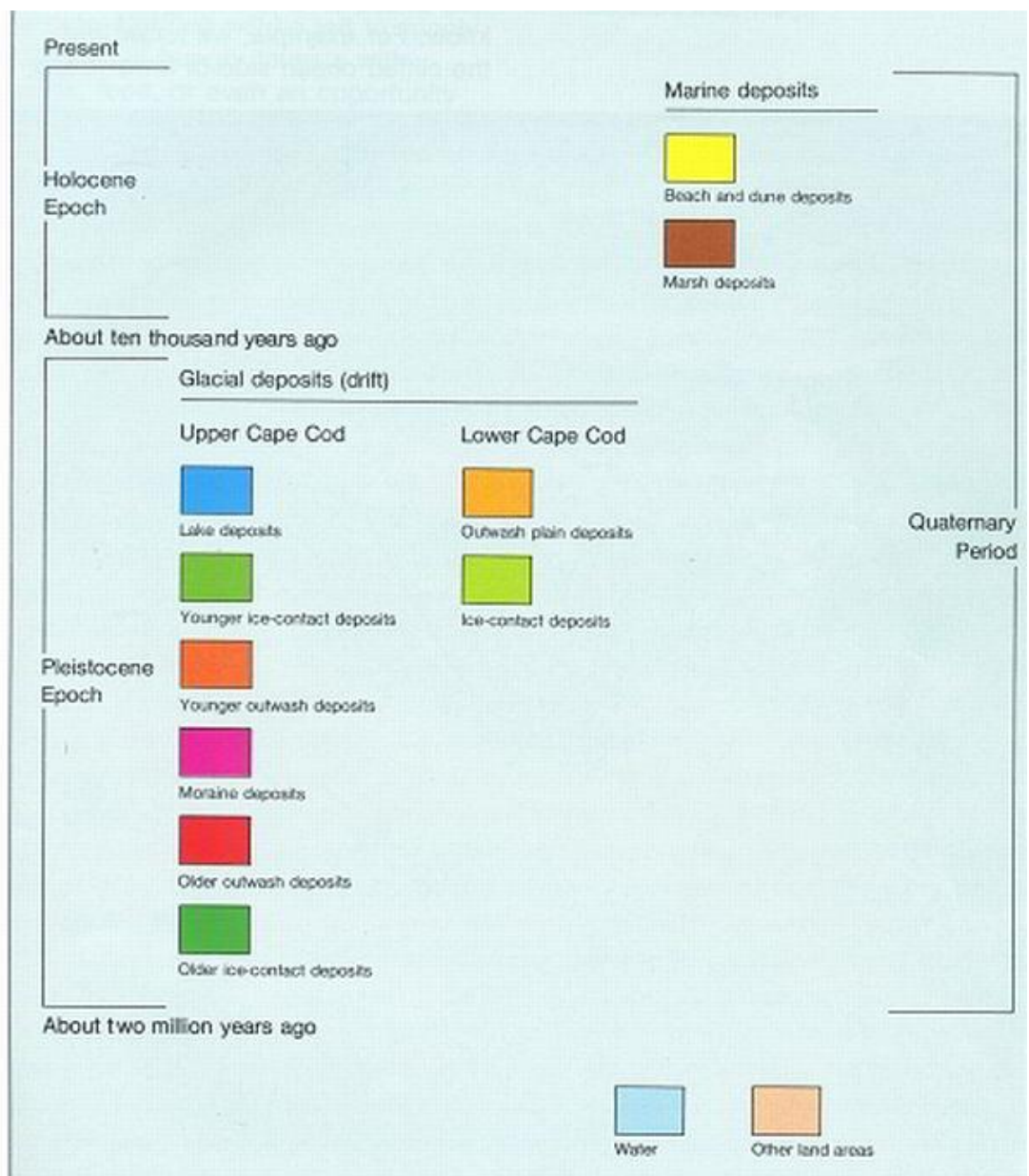
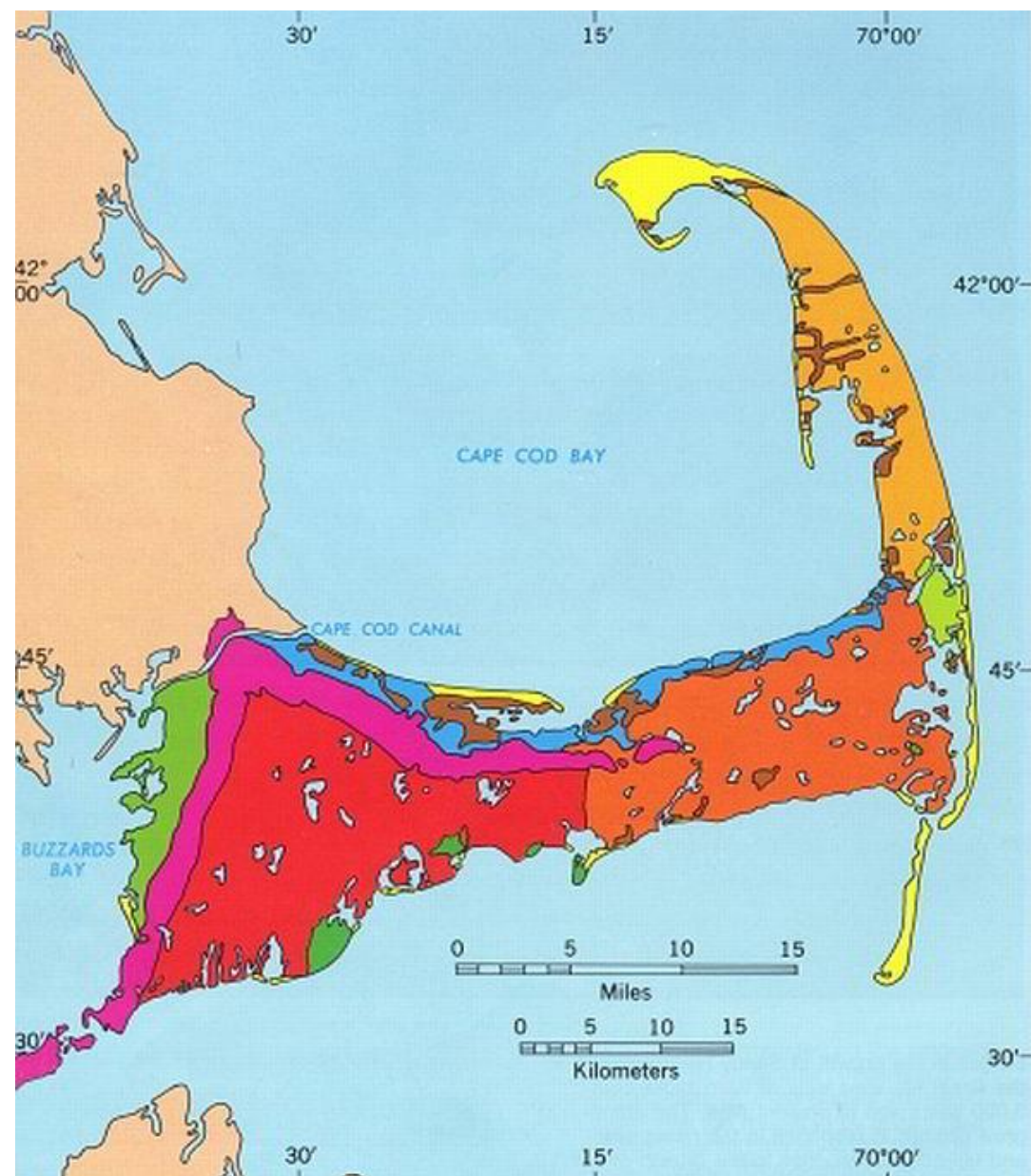
A photograph of a coastal landscape at sunset. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses. In the middle ground, there are dark green trees and shrubs. The background shows a bright orange and yellow sunset sky with some clouds. The text "Need for Cape-Specific Ecological Fluency" is overlaid in the center.

Need for Cape-Specific Ecological Fluency

What Makes Cape Cod Unique?

- Unsettled Sediment Deposit
- Acidic, Nutrient-Poor Soils
- Maritime Climate
- Disturbance regimes, Indigenous prescribed fire*
- Regionally and Globally Rare Plant Communities (PPSOs, Coastal Plain Pond shore, Sandplain Grassland/Heathland, Bogs, Salt Marsh, Fens, Dunes)

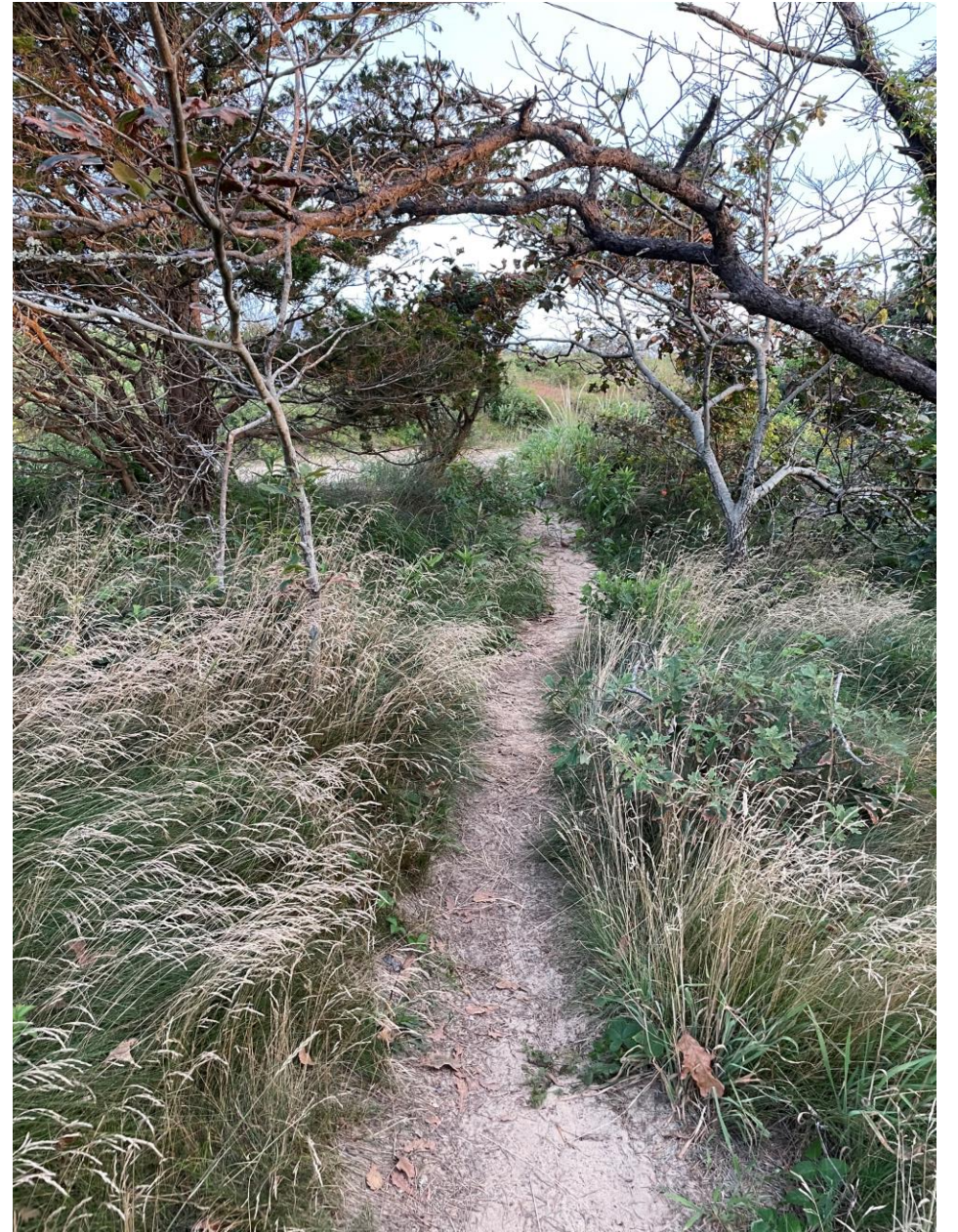




Plants as Objects vs. Plants as Components

"Moving from the idea of traditional planting to a designed plant community starts with letting go of the idea of plants as objects to be placed, like pieces of furniture. Instead, think about plants as groups of compatible species that interact with each other and the site"

- Thomas Rainier




The high line in New York, plantings designed by Piet Oudolf (Acroterion, 2017)



Pine Barren in Waterboro, Maine
[North Atlantic Fire Science Exchange](#)



- Plant communities contain messages about site conditions, history
- Learning to read landscapes and reproduce ecological structure
- Bridging the gap between rural/wildland management and urban/suburban gardening



Invasive Species

(Britton, n.d)

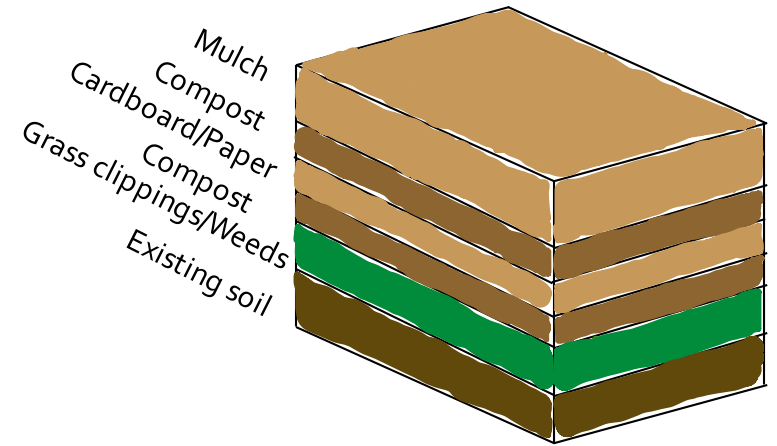
What does "invasive" mean?

- Should not be a label tacked onto a particular species, it is a pattern of behavior within particular ecological contexts.
- Novel succession is unraveling historically valuable ecosystems, putting certain species at risk while promoting others
 - Challenge to make appropriate value judgements in the face of unprecedented environmental change
- Ecological opportunism is normal, improper stewardship is problematic
- Are all exotics invasive? Can a native species act invasive?
- Ecological services, relationships



Dealing with Species Invasions

- Have a long-term plan/goal for the site beyond eradication
- Sheet mulching, tarping, digging + revegetating
- Diligent, well-timed, repeated cutting
- The herbicide debate
- **Preventative measures**
 - Vigorous native plants
 - Denser, layered plantings
 - No heavy fertilizers
 - Mitigating erosion, compaction, stormwater, contractor excavation
 - Mindful management for succession, proper disturbance regimes



(DMCA, n.d.)

"Where Do I Get Native Plants?"

- The side of the road (SEED ONLY), friend's/neighbor's gardens
 - NEED GROWERS for local ecotype native plants/seed
 - NOT with endangered plants or in protected areas
- Flash sales
- Garden in the Woods
- Bluestem Natives
- Native Section in Nurseries (American Beauties)
- Online (Prairie Moon, Wild Seed Project, Izel)





Common Phrases

Rewilding, "Save the Bees," "No-Mow," "No Maintenance"

No Maintenance?

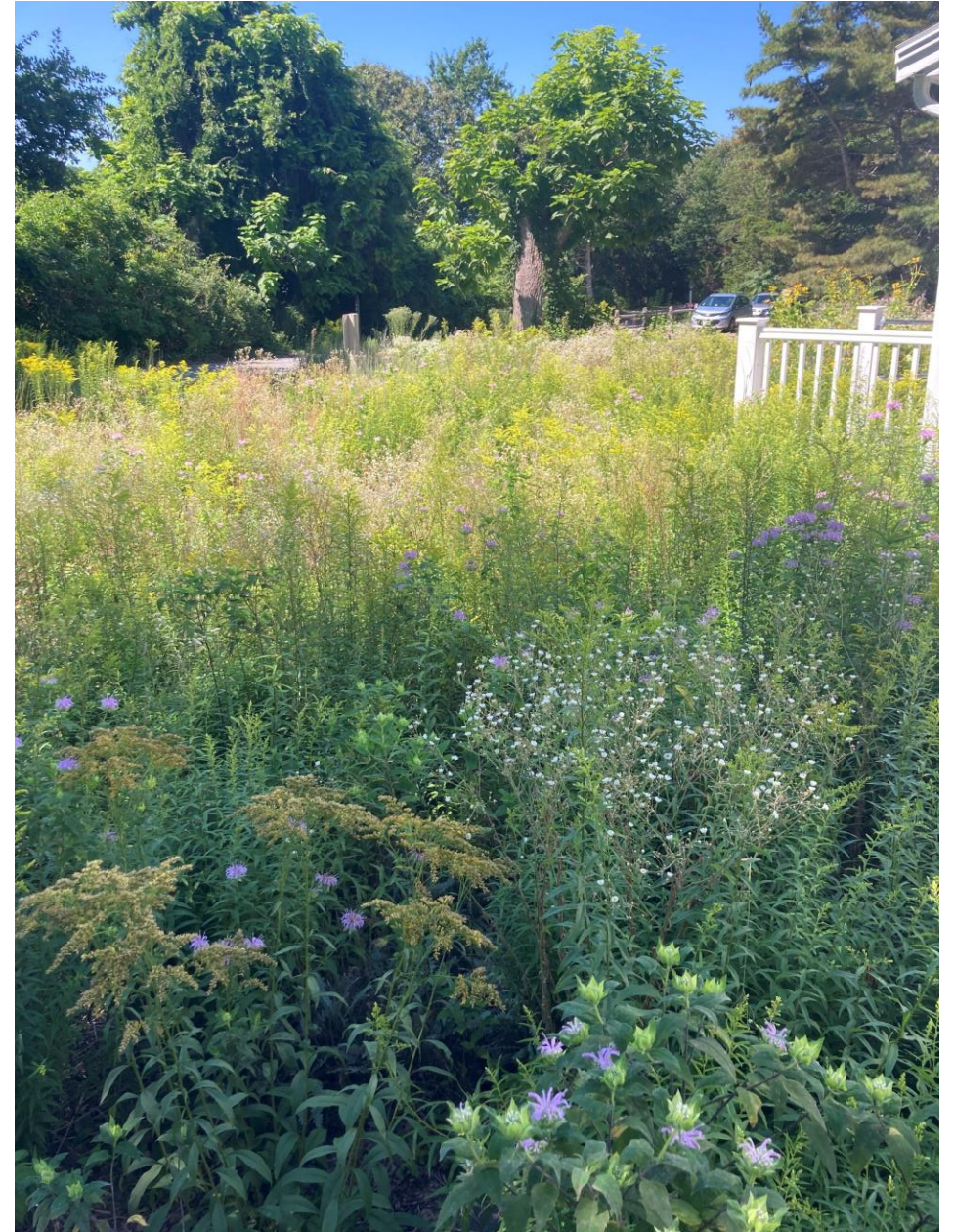
- Habitat management is a more efficient use of labor than lawn maintenance, but it is not simple or care-free
- Glosses over the history of the area
- Does not convey our role as stewards
- Less regular maintenance requires more thought put into design/implementation



[Prescribed Fire at Francis Crane WMA, MA](#)
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

"Management, Not Maintenance:
When plants are arranged
individualistically, they require
individualistic maintenance;
community-based planting
requires management of the
entire community."

-Thomas Rainier



What Do We Manage For?

- Structure, archetypical landscapes/plant communities
- Botanical diversity, structural diversity
- Targeting vulnerable species
- Forage/Environmental Quality
- Aesthetics
- Climate Mitigation



Brushcutting/Wood harvest is often coupled with habitat maintenance.

[mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

"Wild Landscapes Breed Ticks"



- Annual/biennial spring burning / cutting
- Breeding populations of ground-foraging birds and other tick predators
- Mammals spread out
- Seasonally dry

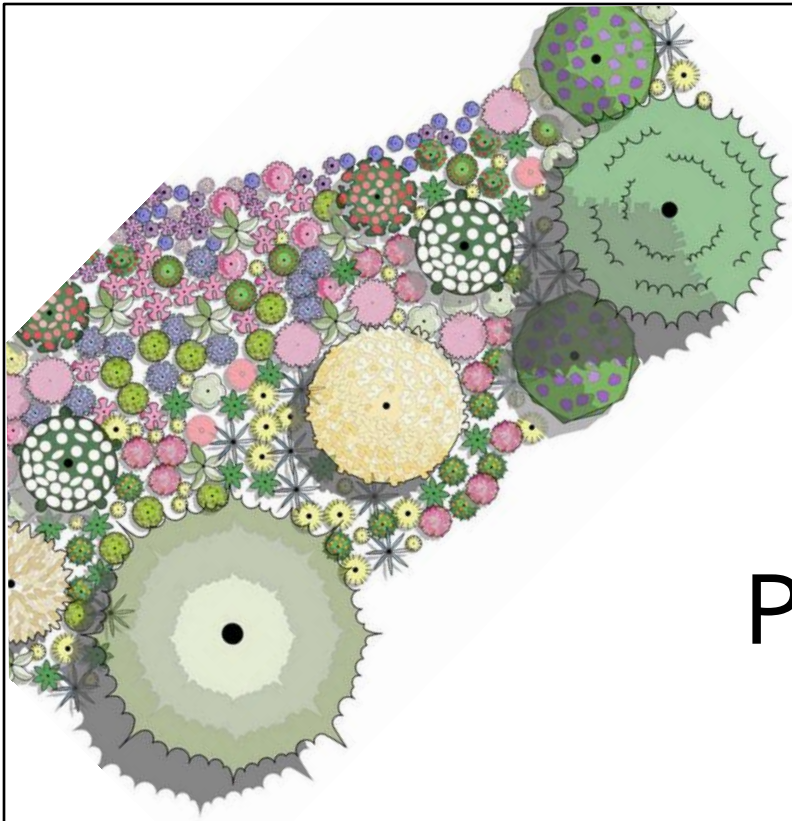


- Neglected, overgrown, humid suburban garden bed
- Limited predation due to pollution, exotic cover
- High traffic, limited wildlife movement
- Dogs, House Mice, Rabbits, Deer
- Irrigation/Stormwater

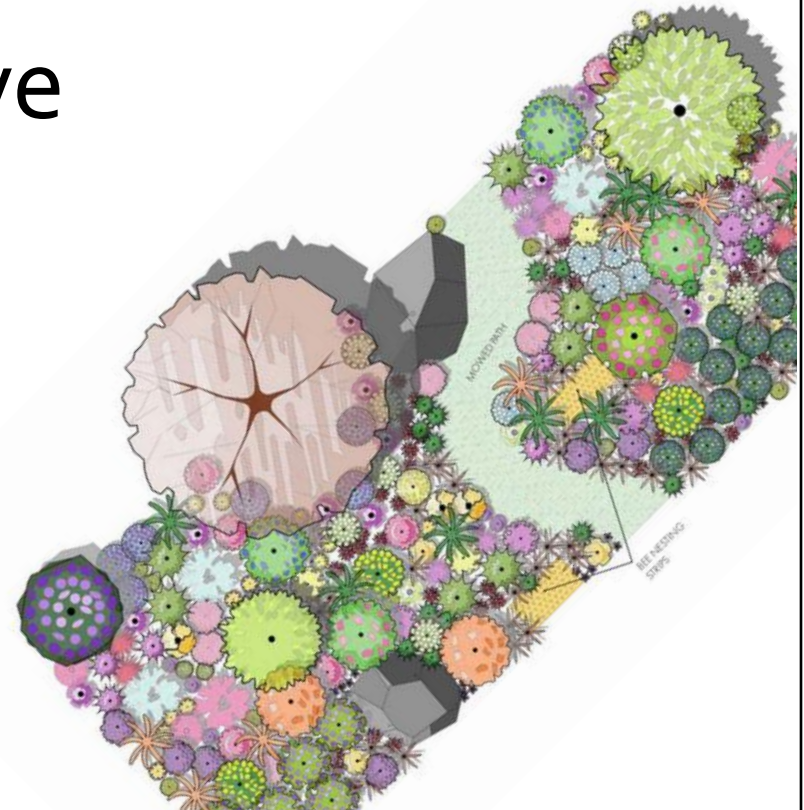
Ticks and Mosquitoes

- Widespread pesticide use (even organic compounds) is a huge threat to pollinators and insectivorous birds; ecological integrity
- Appropriate levels of caution –You CAN protect yourself from pests and disease without harming local ecosystems!
- Greenwashing





Presentation of Native Landscapes



Formality and Natives

- Beauty of native plants vs traditional cape landscaping
- Still possible to have a “formal” design
- In informal designs: cues to care
- Artistic possibilities of native landscapes are very high, largely untapped



Helpful Resources

- *Planting in a Post-Wild World* by Claudia West and Thomas Rainier (2015), *The Living Landscape* by Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy (2014)
- [Landscape Interactions](#) > Services > Toolkits > Green Corridor Pollinator Toolkit (*best management practices and sample garden ideas*)
- [Landscape Interactions](#) > Services > Toolkits > Farming For Biodiversity on Island Grown Farm (*contains Cape and Island's specific native plant communities and plant lists*)
- <https://provincetownindependent.org/top-stories/2023/08/09/uptick-in-spraying-is-harming-local-pollinators/>
- <https://awaytogarden.com/weed-fighting-natives-with-wildscape-author-nancy-lawson/>
- <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/49351> (Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames)

Resources (Citations)

- Landscape Interactions
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Geologic_Map_of_Cape_Cod.jpg
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Highline_and_IAC_Building_NY1.jpg
- <https://www.si.edu/stories/escape-invasives>
- <https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-jtdot>
- <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/prescribed-fire-for-habitat-management>
- <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/wood-harvest-mowing-and-mulching-for-habitat-management>
- <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/58/2/123/259756>
- <https://bioone.org/journals/the-journal-of-the-torrey-botanical-society/volume-149/issue-2/TORREY-D-21-00024.1/Oak-forests-and-woodlands-as-Indigenous-landscapes-in-the-Eastern/10.3159/TORREY-D-21-00024.1.full>