



## MANAGING STATE LANDS FOR WILDLIFE

### Stewardship of WMAs

In addition to the habitat management that occurs on WMAs, owning conserved lands comes with a number of other stewardship responsibilities. Boundary lines are marked and maintained; gates are installed where needed; roads and parking lots are built and maintained to provide management and recreational access; and signs identify where our properties are. Public use (and sometimes misuse) of WMAs are overseen by the Fish and Game Lands Team. Unfortunately, stewardship may simply require cleaning up vandalism or illegal dumping on WMAs.

Refer to any of the State Lands Habitat Program accomplishment reports for examples of stewardship projects on WMAs.

### Boundary Line Maintenance

Keeping boundaries clearly defined helps ensure habitat management activities are kept on the property; ensure neighboring landowner management does not trespass onto NHFG property; and help recreationists understand the extent of NHFG ownership. At times, when boundary evidence such as blazes and corner posts are no longer visible, surveys may have to be done in order to reconstruct a boundary in the field. Surveys and maintenance of boundaries that are fading are contracted out to survey professionals. Boundaries that can be readily found are maintained by NHFG State Lands Habitat staff. Look for the Fish and Game boundary sign and signature orange boundary paint.



*A boundary tree marked with orange blazes and boundary signs at the Henry Laramie WMA. Brian Lemire photo.*

## WMA Kiosks and Signs

Signage helps to identify a property as state land open to many forms of public recreation. State Lands Habitat staff worked with Public Affairs staff to develop an eye appealing but economical design for both signs and kiosks. Kiosks are installed at properties that see consistent public use and include a property map and site information, WMA rules, credit to funding organizations, and other information.



*One of the newly designed signs and kiosks recently installed on Muchyedo Banks WMA in Canterbury.*

## Gates

Gates are installed at access points that have consistently seen illegal dumping, partying, and/or illegal access by OHRVs. Ineffective blockades such as cables or rotting logs are replaced with standard swing arm gates painted orange and fixed with reflectors for safety.

## Access Roads and Parking Areas

Access roads need to be maintained to provide access for habitat management projects and public recreation. Roads can become degraded due to normal wear and tear, significant rain events, or improper placement or construction.

The Department strives to provide safe parking areas for visitors at our WMAs. Occasionally, site conditions determine that the best parking is along the roadside and sometimes, public access is not well defined. These are issues that the Lands Team are aware of and looks for opportunities to address.



*A new parking area and gate was installed at the Conner Farm WMA in 2013.*

### **Removal of Derelict Buildings**

Fish and Game occasionally purchases or receives donated property with buildings on them. While the properties are acquired for their habitat value, the Department does not have a need or the resources to maintain additional buildings. Buildings are assessed for hazardous materials, such as asbestos, abated if necessary and demolished. The building site is restored to blend into the natural surroundings of the remaining property.



*Contractors removing asbestos roof shingles during the garage demolition at Union Meadows WMA in Wakefield.*