

**ODIORNE POINT STATE PARK  
DECADE AND MORE OF ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION-  
PROGRESS UPDATE WINTER 2022-2023**

During the past decade, the Division of Parks and Recreation in partnership with the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) have invested over \$600,000 dollars (operating and grant funds) and over 10,000 volunteer hours to restore the native coastal habitats found at Odiorne Point State Park which include some of the rarest ecosystems in the State. Following the Odiorne Point State Park Invasive Plant Management Plan (the Plan) (FB, 2010) the goal is to restore native plant communities through the control of invasive plant species infestations which will benefit native plant species, wildlife, and improve aesthetic and recreational opportunities and public safety in the park.

When the Plan was created, at least 18 of 26 prohibited species on the state invasive plant list and 230 acres of the 330-acre park were heavily invaded by invasive plants. Species with the greatest threat to freshwater and brackish or coastal environments include glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and common reed (*Phragmites*). These two plants are known to spread rapidly, forming monocultures that outcompete native wetland species in relatively short time spans. The major threats to our coastal forested communities include Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), glossy buckthorn, and bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.) All these plants can be found around the Frost Point area, and the western sections of the park.

**In December 2022**, with support from partners including the landowner, the Division of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and the NHDES, Coastal Program, RCCD was able to secure a careful restoration contractor with knowledge of invasive plants. Our contractor used an excavator with a mounted drum mower to mow densely populated invasives generally found to the west of Frost Point Road. This area also contains rare coastal native habitats, and restoration will soon begin to reestablish these native habitats.

Please take care in these areas, and do not access the newly mowed spots as native habitat restoration will **begin in the Spring/Summer of 2023/2024**. Please respect our temporary signage and keep yourselves on the existing main paths, and not in any newly opened areas.

Many of the invasive species within the park have been targeted for control using multiple Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques including mechanical and careful chemical control methods. The RCCD continues to work inside guidelines for protecting historical and cultural resources, and to collaborate with our partner agencies to ensure appropriate management techniques are implemented.

Much of the project also relies on holding education and outreach sessions on site that include IPM techniques and native plantings. Rare and imperiled coastal habitats, and a few community types that are globally rare are located at Odiorne. Partner collaboration and significant volunteer assistance (the majority comes from the Seacoast Science Center) really makes this coastal habitat restoration project at Odone a successful model.

Since 2010, the District has been able to initiate restoration 175 +/- acres of coastal habitat, including projects to: eliminate *Phragmites* from a coastal salt pond, restore the Bayberry beach plum maritime shrubland on a cobble dune, and eliminate buckthorn from a freshwater wetland that supported two state listed damselflies. Additional resources will be needed for continued maintenance of these habitat types to prevent invasive plants from regaining a strong-foothold on the coastal habitats found here.

Restoration design now also includes looking toward future potential conditions with accelerated sea level rise. You will likely begin to see changes in conditions to ensure the most appropriate coastal access, which will be determined by partners soon. Thanks for your continued support in our habitat restoration efforts at Odiorne, and please contact us through our website if you'd be interested in volunteering at [.www.rockinghamccd.org](http://www.rockinghamccd.org), or at the Seacoast Science Center.