

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**Project #:** T-23-P-001

**Project Title:** Critical habitat for Massasauga.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this project is to expand the range of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake and other grassland species at South Shore State Park and Eldon Hazlet State Park on Carlyle Lake by: 1) Managing and enhancing existing known massasauga habitat; and 2) restoring 200 acres of successional growth, dominated by autumn olive and other exotics, which is adjacent to known massasauga habitat into grasslands. The increase of habitat will expand the range of the massasauga, a state-endangered species, as well as other grassland species. Carlyle Lake is the last stronghold of this critically imperiled species.

### **Summary of Progress:**

#### Task #1 (managing and enhancing existing massasauga habitat):

- 1). An estimated 125 acres received winter mowing to control successional growth and to stimulate grassland habitat growth. These areas are either known hibernation sites, or adjacent to hibernation sites, or show historical snake “hits” according to Illinois Natural History Survey data base for the Massasauga. (A snake “hit” is either a confirmed road kill or a confirmed sighting of a massasauga).
- 2) An estimated 272.28 acres received controlled burning. These areas are either known hibernation sites, or adjacent to hibernation sites, or show historical snake “hits” according to Illinois Natural History Survey data base for the Massasauga.
- 3). Dormant basal bark herbicide spraying (approximately 45 gallons) was applied to control autumn olive and other invasive species in both state parks.

#### Task #2 (restoring 200 acres of successional growth, dominated by autumn olive and other exotics, which is adjacent to known massasauga habitat into grasslands):

- 1) On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 park staff were notified by IDNR that a contract has been executed for T-23-P-001 to begin Task #2. This information will be reported in the 2007 summary report.
- 2) In 2006, IDNR’s Region IV purchased a skid steer with a grinding wheel attachment. The machine, known as the “Bull Hog” has been at Eldon Hazlet State Park for a period of 5 weeks in 2007. Park staff have used the machine to clear successional growth in biological sensitive areas to benefit goals of this project. This information will be added to the 2007 summary report as well.