



Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment

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Deputy Chief ~ Forest Environment

Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment

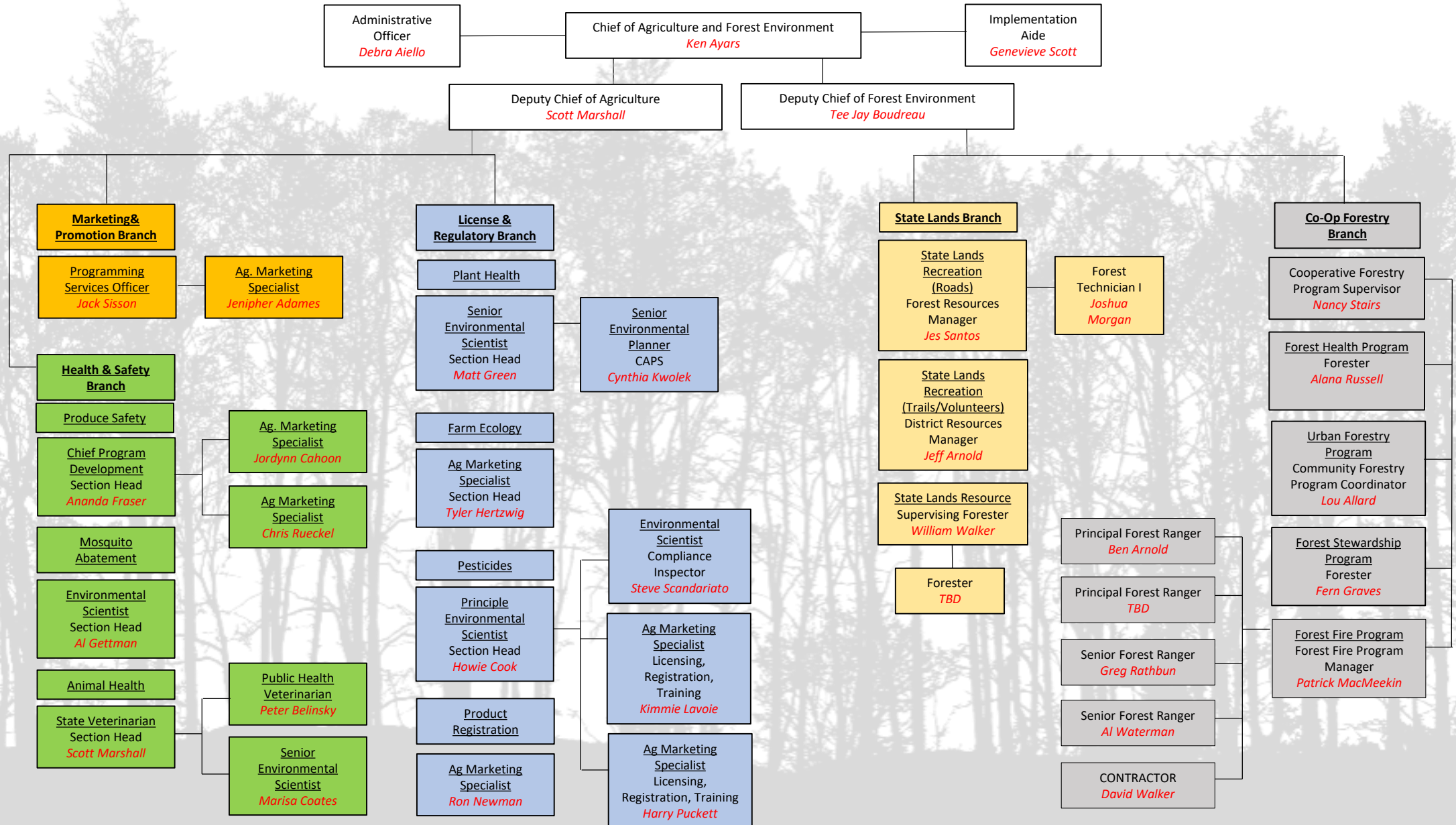


In 2020, the Divisions of Agriculture and Forest Environment merged into the Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment.

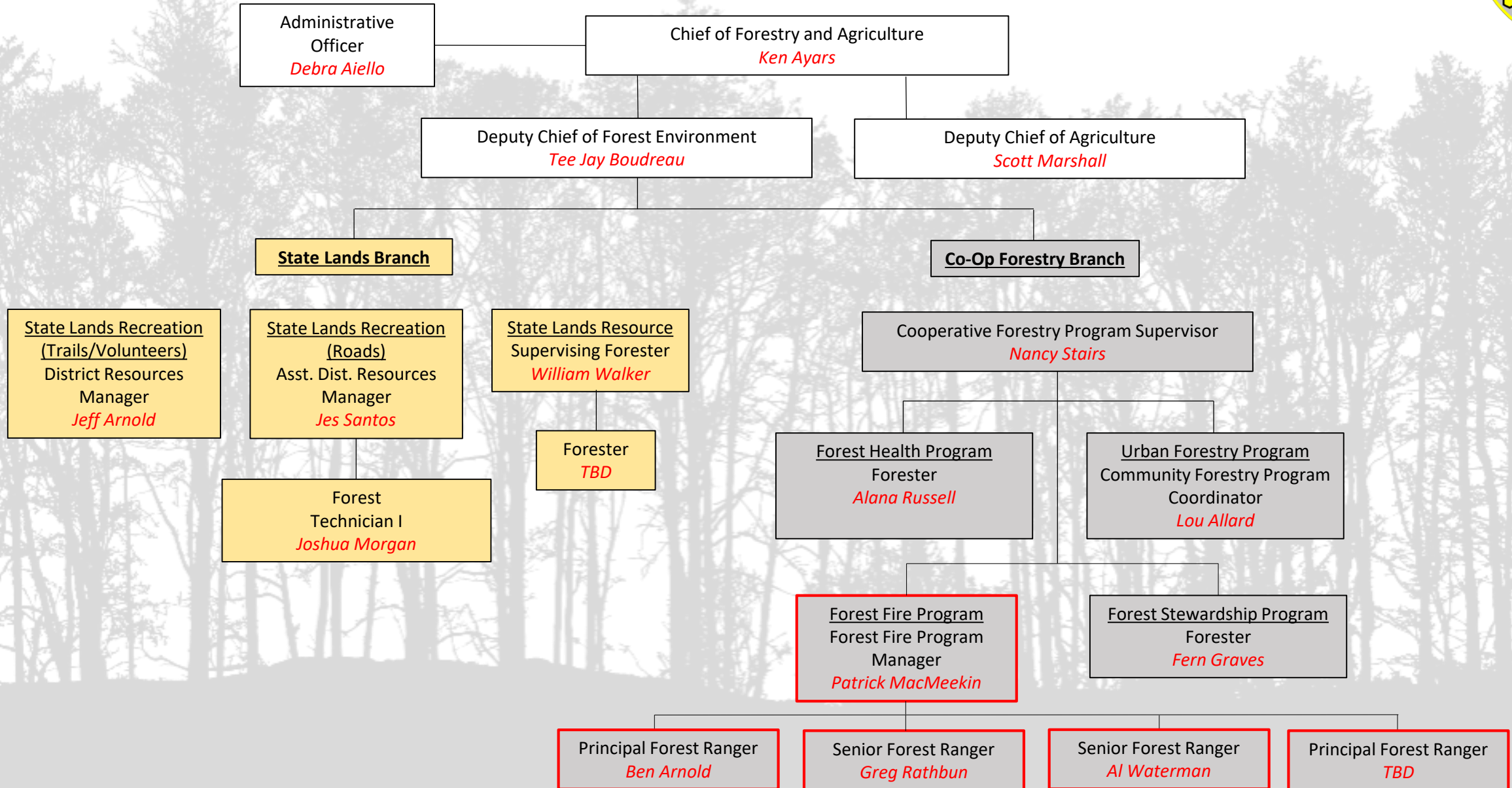
The newly merged Division created new synergies and partnerships in program deliverables on environmental health and safety issues.

Siloed expertise has bled into various program areas to extend knowledge and assist staff.

Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment All Staff



Forest Environment All Staff





RI DEM Forest Environment

Main Focus Areas:

1. Federal Consolidated Grants Program

A. Fire Program

B. Health Program

C. Stewardship Program

D. Urban and Community Forestry Program

2. State Lands Management

A. Woodland Management

B. Forest Recreation Program - Trails

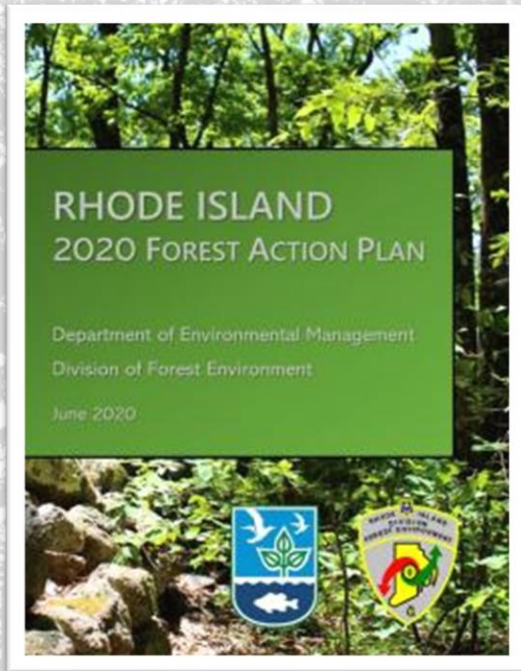
C. Forest Recreation Program - Roads



RI DEM Forest Environment

2020 Forest Action Plan

1. Establishes a vision for the management of RI's forest resources.
2. Provides goals, policies, and strategies focused on the management of tree resources.
3. Intended to advance local stewardship towards the twin goals of a healthy, sustainable forest economy and forest environment.





RI DEM Forest Environment

1. Manage 40,000 + acres of forestland within Mgmt. Areas ~ Operation & Maintenance of 6% of the state's land area through Recreation and Woodland Management
2. Coordinates a statewide forest fire protection plan, and; provide forest fire protection on state lands, assists rural volunteer fire departments
3. Promote understanding of environmental conservation and assist the Feds in providing landowner assistance programs.
4. Monitor and recommend controls for insects and disease, work with communities promoting urban tree health, to license arborists, and to certify forest land under the state's Farm, Forest and Open Space Act.



RI DEM Forest Environment

Main areas of focus:

1. Federal Consolidated Grants Program

- A. Fire Program
- B. Health Program
- C. Stewardship Program
- D. Urban and Community Forestry Program

2. State Lands Management

- A. Woodland Management
- B. Forest Recreation Program - Trails
- C. Forest Recreation Program - Roads





RI DEM Forest Environment

Forest Fire Program

- Grant Assistance (Volunteer Fire)
- Management Area Maintenance
- Wildfire Response (Near, Far)
- Education and Outreach

- Federal and Regional Partnerships
 - USDA | NFFPC





April 2023 Fire Damage



2020 Reported Fires



RI DEM Forest Environment

Forest Health Program



- Monitors Pests and Diseases
- Tracks and Records Trends
- Education and Outreach

- Federal and Regional Partnerships
 - USDA | FEMC





RI DEM Forest Environment Forest Stewardship Program

- Landowner Assistance
- Forest Land Classification (FFOS)
- Education and Outreach
- Federal and Regional Partnerships
 - USDA





RI DEM Forest Environment

Urban Forestry Program

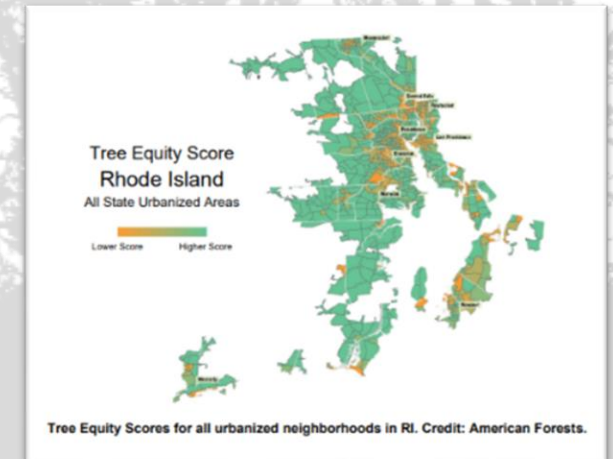
- Community Assistance (Grants)
- RI Tree Council
- Education and Outreach



- Federal and Regional Partnerships
- USDA



**URBAN FORESTRY IN RHODE ISLAND:
EDGEWOOD, CRANSTON**





Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/ Inflation Reduction Act

BIL

Forest Action Plan Spending

\$238,000 FY for 5 years - Divided amongst the Federal Grant Programs

State Fire

\$53,000 FY Training and Capacity Building

IRA

Urban Forestry Program

\$1.2 Million – Community Capacity Building

Stewardship Program

\$500,000 – Underserved Landowner Program Outreach

Non-State Partner Allocation (NOFO)

\$6.75 Million (Pawtucket \$3mil, HHS \$3mil, E. Prov. \$750k)

**\$300,000 Earmark
Urban Forestry
Program**

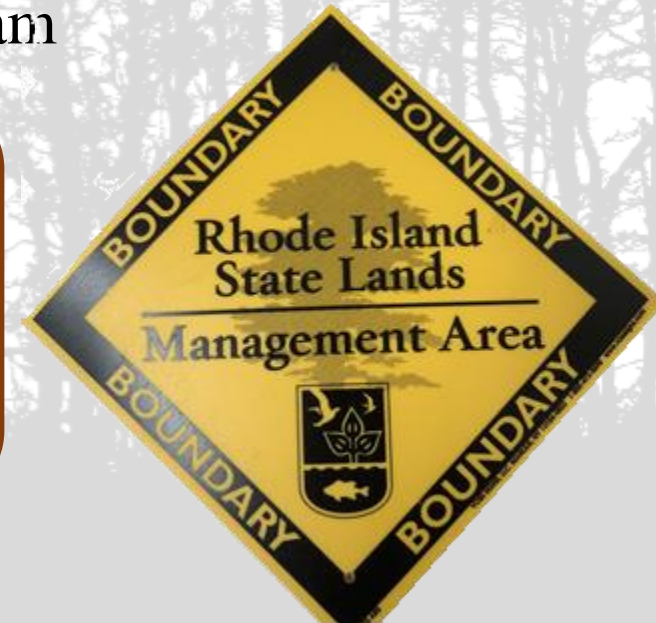
**\$100,000 RGGI
Urban Forestry
Program**



RI DEM Forest Environment

Main areas of focus:

1. Federal Consolidated Grants Program
 - A. Fire Program
 - B. Health Program
 - C. Stewardship Program
 - D. Urban and Community Forestry Program
2. State Lands Management
 - A. Woodland Management
 - B. Forest Recreation Program - Trails
 - C. Forest Recreation Program - Roads



Forest Conservation Need



Current Rhode Island laws do not provide protection for forestland (apart from existing wetland protection laws)

2021 – Forest Conservation Act

The general assembly recognizes that RI forest land has many important values, and that forest land should be maintained to meet Rhode Island's aggressive climate change goals through carbon sequestration and storage.

Core forest land and connecting natural areas should be conserved to prevent ongoing fragmentation of the state's forests.

It is in the best interest of...the state to identify and acquire the development rights to core and unfragmented forests so as to maintain these important forest values.



Woodland Management

40,000+ Acres under DFE purview

1. Manage for multiple environmental benefits:

A. Wildlife Habitat

B. Ecosystem Services – improved air quality and clean water protection

C. Overall Forest Health – combat pest and diseases

D. Advance Silvicultural Research

E. Recreation



Woodland Management

Historic Data

1990 Staffing

16 Rangers
2 Equipment Operators
18 Laborers
7 Foresters

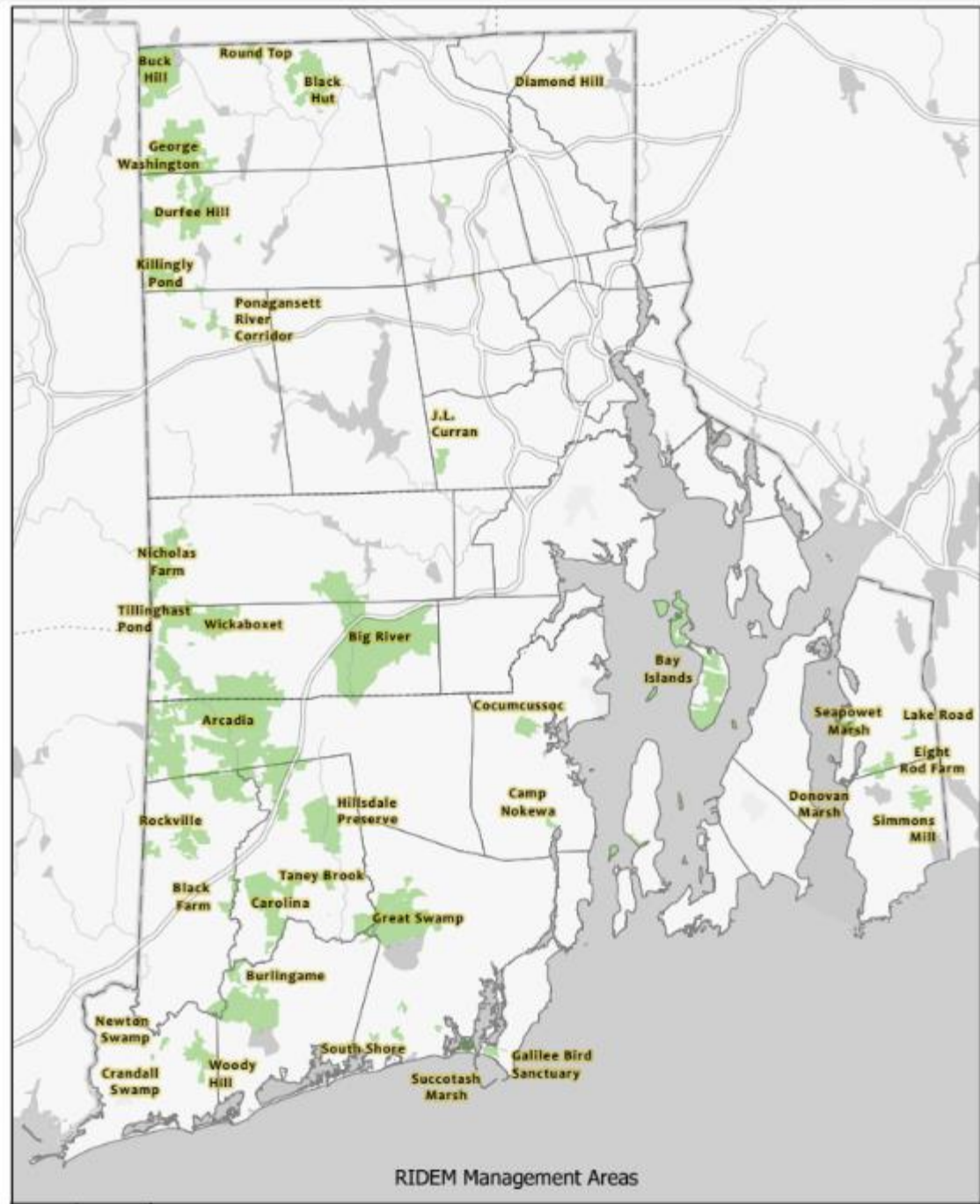
2000 Staffing

7 Rangers
1 Equipment Operator
4 Laborers
7 Foresters

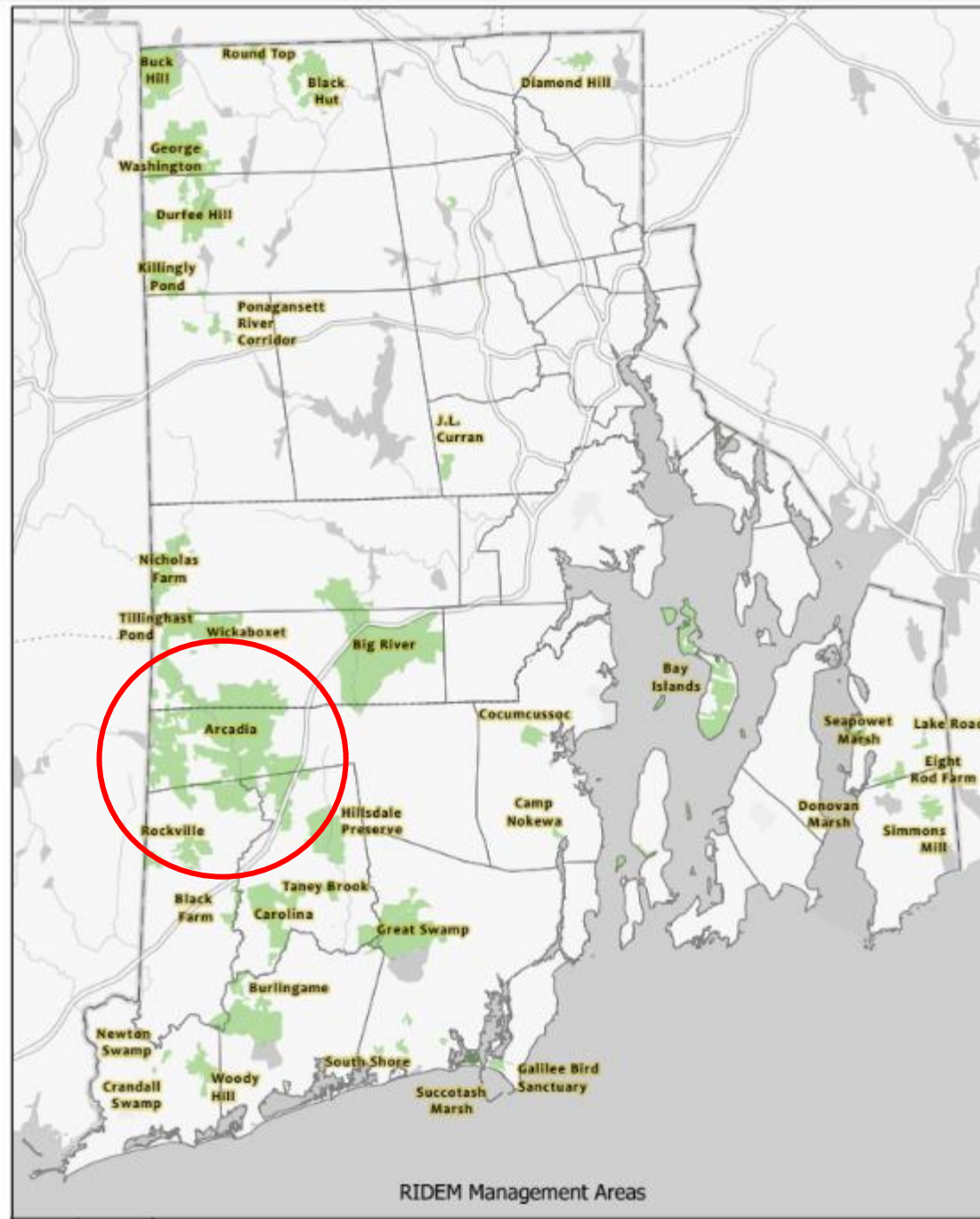
2023 Staffing

4 Rangers
0 Equipment Operator
3 Laborers
6 Foresters

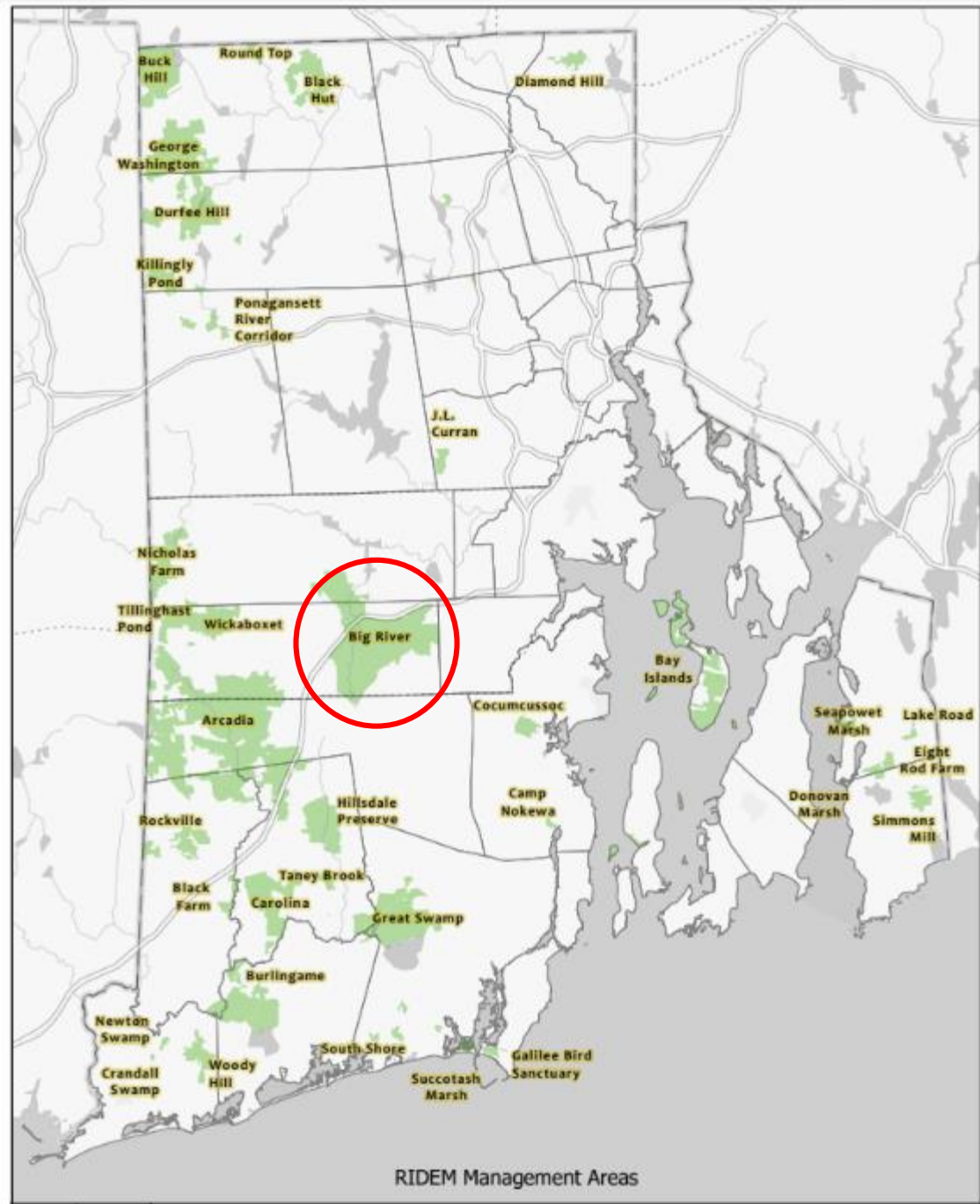
* Since 1980 RI DEM has acquired over 23,000 additional acres to its landholding within the Divisions of DFW and DFE.



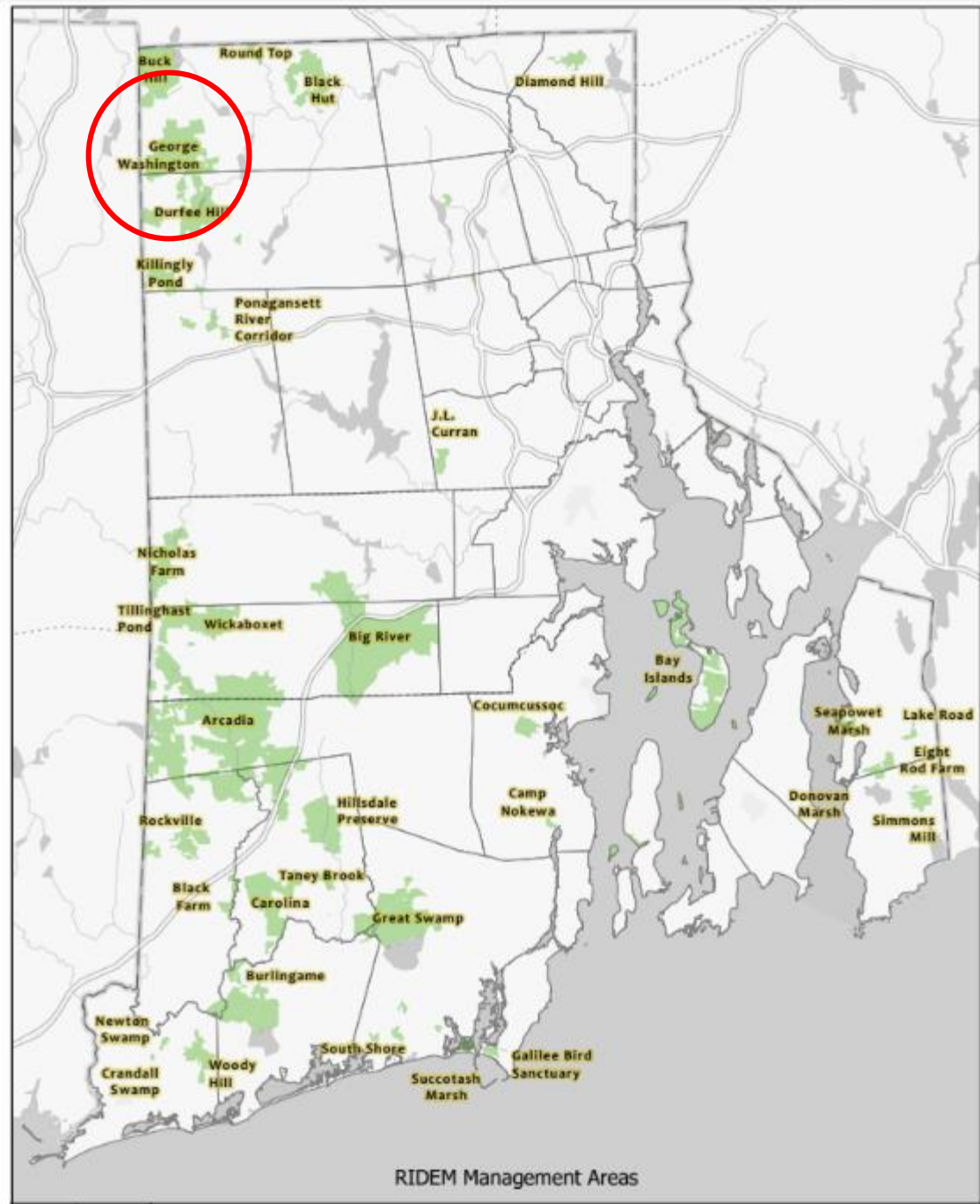
RIDEM Management Areas



RIDEM Management Areas



RIDEM Management Areas



RIDEM Management Areas



Timber Stand Improvements

ATTENTION/CAUTION

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT A FUELS REDUCTION/TIMBER HARVESTING OPERATION IS TAKING PLACE IN THIS AREA. THIS PROJECT WILL IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE FOREST, INCREASE WILDLIFE HABITATS, HELP TO MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY AND REDUCE POTENTIAL WILDLAND FIRES.

DUE TO THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND SAFETY CONCERNS, PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL DEM/
DIVISION OF FOREST ENVIRONMENT/
ARCADIA HEADQUARTERS AT 539-2356



Grant
Provided
By:



2022

Arcadia M.A. - 75 acre

Timber stand improvement white
pine calisopsis canker





Timber Stand Improvements

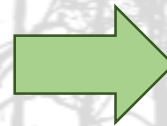


2017-18
Carolina M.A. - 37 acre
Timber stand improvement
thinning of over mature white pine

Forest Recreation - Roads

25+ Miles of Vehicular Roadway (Arcadia)

1. Manage for recreational access | Emergency Access
 - A. Horses, Mountain Bikes, Dirt Bikes, Snowmobiles, etc.



Forest Recreation - Dumping



Forest Recreation - Trails

100s+ Miles of Multiuse Trails

1. Manage for recreational access





SPECIAL USE PERMITS BY USER GROUP TYPE - 2018

ARCADIA REGION

TYPE OF USE	# OF PERMITS	# OF GROUPS	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Camping & Hiking	17	11	488
Horse Riding	13	6	494
Motorcycle	8	2	359
Field trial	6	4	131
Environmental Study	9	7	135
Recreation Areas	3	2	57
Boy/Cub/Girl Scouts	8	7	145
Military	3	2	49
Mountain Bike	27	7	1345
Fishing/Canoeing	11	5	349
Miscellaneous	11	8	372
	Total Permits		116
	Number of Groups		61
	Number of Participants		3924



2022 \$50 MILLION green bond

The logo for the 2022 \$50 Million Green Bond features the year "2022" in light blue, "\$50 MILLION" in dark blue, and "green bond" in green and dark blue. To the right of the text is a green tree icon, and to the left is a blue leaf icon.

FOREST AND HABITAT RESTORATION \$3 MILLION

For forest health management and wildlife habitat projects at state management areas. Rhode Island's forests and trees may seem like a green backdrop to our landscape, but they are in fact hard at work generating a wide range of services and values. Forests are a place where humans and native wildlife can live and thrive by providing habitats for animals and livelihoods for humans. They also offer watershed protection, prevent soil erosion, purify our air, clean our water, and mitigate climate change.



Green Bond Spending 'Buckets'

Management Plans **\$700,000**

Removal of hazard dead standing trees **\$1,500,000**

Invasive Plant Control **\$500,000**

DFE "Increasing RI's Prescribed Burn Capacity" Grant Extension **\$300,000**



RI DEM Forest Environment Forest Fire Program





Forest Fire Program

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program

Purpose:

To use pass-through federal funding to provide financial, technical and related assistance to rural fire departments to prevent and suppress rural fires and enhance protection capabilities (training, equipment).

Supports wildland urban interface issues and meeting the needs of communities at risk. Issues and needs include firefighter safety and training, enhancing community water supply and delivery capabilities, communications, and equipping.

Eligibility:

Local fire departments in communities with populations of 10,000 or less.

FY 23 Grant Funds- \$35,000 – 17 Grants



Forest Fire Program

Education and Outreach

Classes and workshops including wildfire attack, chainsaw safety, preplan/incident response, wildfire behavior, single resource boss, and advance leadership

National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) curriculum



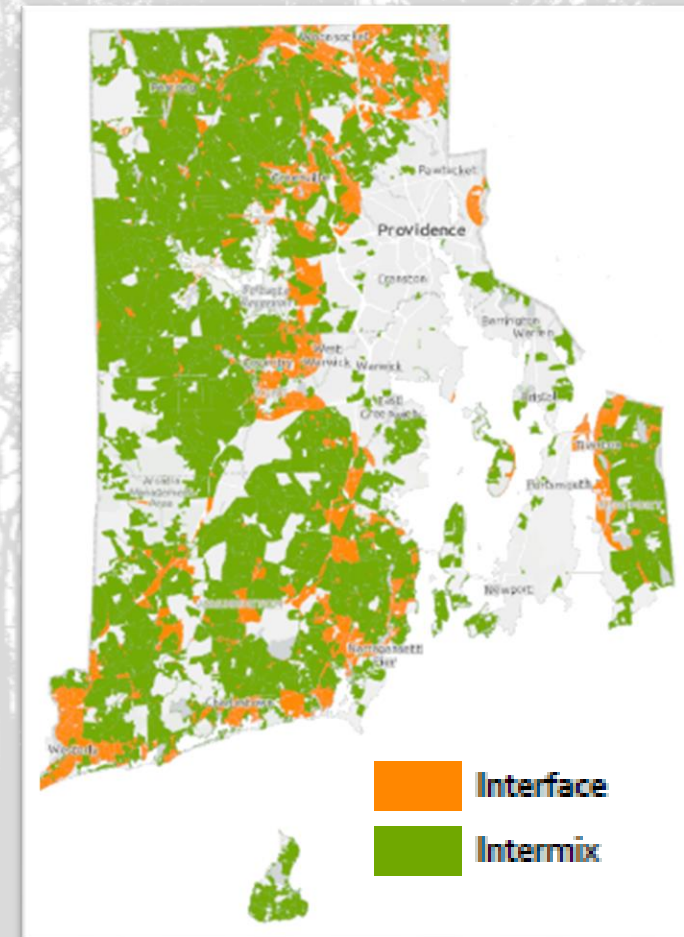
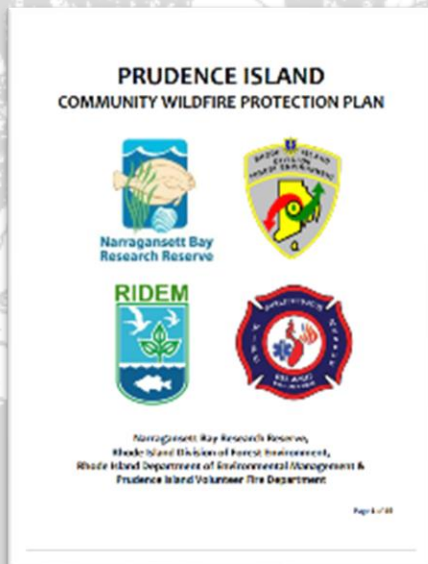


Forest Fire Program

Education and Outreach

Firewise Program – A national program adopted by DFE to help residents protect property from uncontrolled wildfire.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan - used to identify priority areas for fuels reduction treatments and recommend treatment methods





Forest Fire Program

State Land Management

Prescribed Fire

2023

4 Burns – 49 total acres

Pratt Farm, Exeter | Nicolas Farm, Coventry

Shaded Fuel Break Activity

1 shaded fuel break implemented at GW Management Area

Proof of concept and demonstration site

Approx ½ mile long

1 shaded fuel break planned in Arcadia Management Area

planned 1 mile long



“We strongly believe that more planned, prescribed fires mean fewer unplanned, extreme wildfires.”



Forest Fire Program

Wildfire Response

2021 Year in Review

Fires:

101 fires, 178.1 acres burned (average size 1.76 acres)

Largest fire – 52 acres

Residences threatened – 32

damaged – 4

Outbuildings threatened – 21

damaged – 2

Injures requiring transport – 3

Bags of hose – 342 - 102,600 ft (19.4 miles)



April 2023 Fire Damage



Wildfire Response

(Continued)

Before A Fire

- Preplanning
- Train municipal fire department and other agencies in wildland fire topics

Fire Response:

DFE hears the 911 radio tone for a report of a wildland fire

- Self dispatch if the radio traffic sounds like a large or complex fire
- OR-
- DFE may call the responding Municipal fire department via cell phone and ask “if and what kind of assistance is needed?”
- OR-
- DFE may get a “cold call” from a municipal fire department or dispatch center requesting a response

On Scene

- We integrate with the responding party
- We fill needed roles whatever they are- firefighter up to command staff
- We help make decisions on fire suppression strategy

After The Fire

- We compile reporting
- We service the hose



Well-managed, healthy forests, require management, planning, best management practices, whether on state-owned and managed land, or on private lands and benefits residents, wildlife, watersheds, municipalities and Narragansett Bay.

Thank You
Questions?