



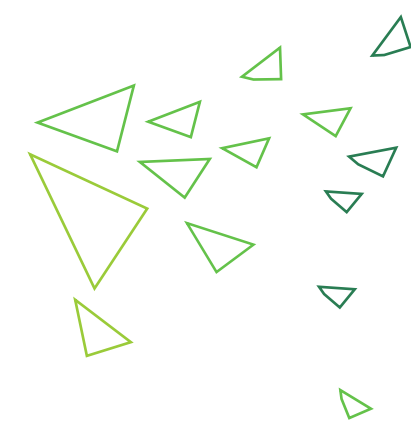
# Forest Management Issues

From the Perspective of Local Fire Chiefs  
presented by Scott D. Gavitt, Volunteer Chief Exeter #1 Fire

## WOOD RIVER VALLEY REFORESTATION PROJECT

BURNED 8,000 ACRES 1951  
LOSS OVER 6,000,000  
BOARD FEET OF LUMBER  
OBJECTIVE TO REGAIN FOREST  
WILDLIFE WATERSHED AND  
RECREATIONAL VALUES  
PROJECT STARTED IN 1954  
PLANTED TO DATE 690,000 SEEDLINGS  
PROJECT WAS COMPLETED IN 1964





## Volunteer Fire Departments

59% of Rhode Island's Lands are Forests.

<https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/programs/forestry/documents/ritrends>

## Our firefighters know the terrain

We have searched these areas for missing and injured citizens. And we've fought the fires in the Management and Conservation areas.



# 4 Issues and 1 Helpful Suggestion

**Access Issues**



**Inadequate Trail Widths**



**Resources**



**Slash Cuttings,  
Dead Trees &  
Undergrowth**

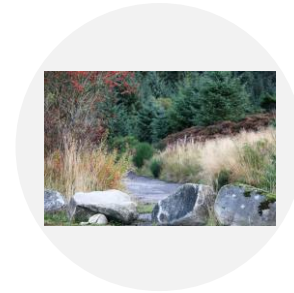


**Deliver Firewise  
Program**





# Access Issues



## **Too Few Access Points**

Many areas have only 1 access point, minimizing chances we can reach the head of the fire before it gets out of control.



## **Boulders Blocking Access**

We do not have the time or money to hire excavators to move the rocks.

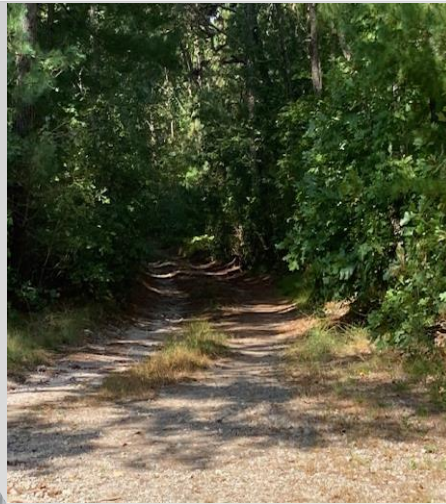


# Access We Cannot Access in a Timely Manner





Gates allow fire apparatus entry. Rocks do not!





# Inadequately Maintained Fire Trails, or none at all

State Fire Trails are under maintained; Conservation Lands have few or no Fire Trails

How do we get firefighters and our vehicles in these areas to get water on the fire, before the fire threatens more heavily forested areas?







## Slash Cutting and Little Forestry Management

Slash left to rot, adds to the fuel load of a potential fire. Not cutting mature trees leave no room for new growth.

Years of insect damage: Asian Longhorned Beetle, White Pine Diseases, Gypsy Moths, and now Emerald Ash Borers, have left plenty of dead trees.



## Commitment & Strategy Needed

There needs to be a strategy developed, just as was done to repair the State's bridges in a timely fashion, to manage forested lands and get excess deadwood cleared up in an accelerated time frame.





# Little Forestry Management Helps Fire Crown and Spread





# Resources

- Installation of dry hydrants on State lands and assistance with obtaining approvals for conservation lands.



- Assist FD's with forest fire equipment: tools and hose.
- It's not the same as structural firefighting tools.

- Streamline the red tape to receive helicopter water drops from RING.
- Disseminate the information on how to receive RING assistance.





# 1 Helpful Suggest for our citizens living in forested areas

The **Firewise USA®** recognition program is administered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action **to increase the ignition resistance of their homes** and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level.





# FireWise Program by the National Fire Protection Assoc. (NFPA)

To Help Local Landowners, we need:

- 1). **Commit to Offer Program** - State Forestry prepares a State-wide Wildfire Assessment with input from Conservation Groups, if possible
- 2). **Plan** – Forestry Develops Strategy/Organizes Community Volunteers/with local Fire & EMA Officials to assist with getting the word out to the citizens
- 3). **Do** – Host outreach events in communities throughout RI with State forests, parks, and large conservation areas







## Summary

Forestry Management from Local Fire Chief's  
Perspective

- After years of neglect due to budget and personnel shortages, the State's and Conservation Societies lands are in dire need of maintenance.
- When the rescue of a person is needed, or a fire must be extinguished, the local fire departments are faced with the following issues:
  - Too few access points, which are then blocked with unmovable boulders instead of gates.
  - The few existing fire roads are too narrow for fire apparatus to navigate.
  - What forestry management has occurred in recent years has resulted in heaps of slash left rotting instead of being removed.
  - Too little help forestry tools and delayed help with RING water drops.
- Homeowners in areas of forested lands need to be taught how to properly themselves by utilizing good land management practices. This can be done by a statewide rollout of the N.F.P.A. FireWise Program, by the R.I. Forestry during the winter.



# R.I. State Forestry website

www. <https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/agriculture-and-forest-environment/forest-environment>

It must be noted that the R.I. State Forestry's website under Forest Management lists the following key areas:

- Stewardship
- Forest Health
- Forest Fire
- Urban and Community Forestry
- Forest Legacy

Their 2020 R.I. Forest Action Plan does provide a roadmap for creating sustainable forests.



The **problem** is a lack of funding – safe environments have not been a priority by those who administer tax dollars in many years.

LET'S FUND  
THE FORESTRY  
DIVISION, SO  
THE WORK CAN  
GET DONE!



# Thank You



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