



## Rhode Island Forest Resource Fact Sheet 2024

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### Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Cooperative Fire Protection	\$170,779
Cooperative Forestry	\$410,368
Forest Health Management	\$83,000
Forest Legacy and Community Forestry	\$45,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$709,147</b>

NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester's office.

### Key Issues

- Forest loss, fragmentation, and parcelization.
- Forest health.
- Water.
- Fire.
- Climate change.

### Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Population	1,097,379	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	224
Acres of Forest Land	354,931	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	4,106
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	266,252	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	3,674
Number of NIPF Landowners	5,195	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	14
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	8
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	433,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Number of Rural Fire Departments	70	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	23
Cities and Towns	39	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	27
Forest Based Employment	3,877	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	955,463
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	4,234
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	1,750,000		

### Program Highlights

#### Cooperative Fire Protection

Rhode Island provided 14 Volunteer Fire Assistance grants to local departments. State Fire Assistance provided training for 50 firefighters, including leadership and higher-level incident command courses. Rhode Island experienced two of the largest and most complex wildfires in the State's history in the spring of 2023. This required multi-state mutual aid to assist in the fire suppression efforts, and included hundreds of firefighters, aircraft mobilization, and over 40 fire departments.

#### Forest Health Protection

Defoliation by winter moth continued in 2023, totaling 9,033 acres. Ash mortality caused by the emerald ash borer (EAB) also continued. Three EAB biocontrol agents were released by the University of Rhode Island in 2023. Trap catches of southern pine beetle were 4.6 times higher in 2023 (with 992 beetles caught) than in 2022, indicating the potential of a future outbreak. High levels of winter mortality of hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) were reported in 2023. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management released HWA biocontrol agent *Laricobius nigrinus* for the first time in the State. Beech leaf disease has been detected throughout the State and continues to be monitored as a potential mortality event. Rhode Island also experienced a May frost event that impacted around 2,600 acres.

#### Forest Legacy

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's efforts to protect important forests in western Rhode Island led to the successful acquisition of a conservation easement on one of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Forest Legacy Program (FLP) project tracts. The 23-acre conservation easement was purchased by the State using \$41,250 in FLP funds. The State continues to make progress toward acquiring conservation easements that will permanently protect the remaining 13 tracts that comprise the

Scituate Reservoir Watershed FLP project.

**Forest Stewardship**

The State of Rhode Island does not operate a nursery. Through the Forest Stewardship program and National Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetics Resource program, the State receives financial assistance to support nursery, genetics, and seed programs.

**Landscape Scale Restoration**

Grantee: National Association of Conservation Districts

Federal investment: \$600,000 (13-State project)

Project: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forests and Water

Benefiting States: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, WV

Summary: This interagency, multi-partner collaboration advances science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes and protects water in 13 States across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. The project is also supported by the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and includes focus on protecting water supplies for underserved communities and a climate markets work group. Regional collaboration will drive alignment between the forest and water sectors and facilitate greater information sharing. Projects will result in measurable on-the-ground outcomes.

**Urban and Community Forestry**

In 2023, \$55,000 was granted to the Rhode Island Tree Council and \$56,266 to five awardees for tree planting, public tree inventories, and educational/outreach programs. Also in 2023, Rhode Island celebrated 14 communities participating in Tree City USA and awarded the Tree Campus USA designation to Johnson & Wales University's Providence Campus and Salve Regina University. During FY 2023, 12 educational and/or instructional workshops were conducted through the combined efforts of the Rhode Island Tree Council and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Division of Forest Environment Urban and Community Forestry Program. The Rhode Island Tree Council hosted three tree steward educational courses. FY 2023 also saw the continuation of the Rhode Island DEM Energy-Saving Trees Program, a statewide initiative and partnership with the National Arbor Day Foundation's nationwide Energy-Saving Trees Program, which gives 1,000 trees to Rhode Island homeowners each season.



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