

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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**RIFCO'S SUMMER TWILIGHT SESSION AT G-W FOREST IN WEST GLOCESTER:
"SLASH WALL" & FIREBREAKS**

The RI Forest Conservator's Organization is conducting its annual Summer Twilight Woods Walk at the George Washington Management Area off Pulaski Road in West Glocester, RI on Thursday, August 18, 2022, from 6 to 8 pm. The evening hike will feature a review of the RI DEM Division of Forestry's recent installation of a thinning, a habitat clearing, and a slash wall, along with a fire hazard mitigation project along the Center Trail.

Our hostess will be DEM Stewardship Forester Fern Graves, whose program at the Division of Forest Environment provided the funding for establishing the slash wall surrounding an approximately 5-acre oak regeneration/habitat clearing. These slash walls are less expensive to build and maintain than a deer fence. They are meant to reduce browse damage on sprouting vegetation, giving a variety of plant material an opportunity to become established. Oak and maple saplings, along with wildflowers and other beneficial native shrubs, struggle to survive in the understory of our forests due to the high deer population and their browsing impacts.

There have been several slash wall installations in southern New England over the past couple of years, starting with the first one in all of New England that was established at RIFCO's Merriman Demonstration Woodlot in Foster, RI. They are all part of a regional effort to enhance the resilience of the oak forests here in southern New England. Multiple factors have led in the decline of this keystone forest type that is critical for wildlife and high value forest products.

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The recent project that took place at the G-W Management Area also included the daylighting of the forest road and removal of low-growing vegetation in an effort to improve its function as a fire break.

The site can be accessed from the entrance to the Pulaski Park, located near the end of Pulaski Road close to the RI/CT state line, about ½ mile north of Route 44 in West Glocester. Signs will be posted at the entrance and parking for smaller vehicles will be provided. Car-pooling in larger vehicles will be coordinated by RIFCO volunteers for the drive down Center Trail to the beginning of the walk location.

The RIFCO Summer Twilight Walk is free of charge, and no registration is necessary. Proper social distancing measures will be implemented as needed. For directions to the site, or if you have any questions about the event, contact RIFCO at info@rifco.org, or by call us at (401) 568-3410. For more information about the RI Division of Forestry's Stewardship Program, including the actions taken on this recent project, contact Fern Graves at (401) 539-2356.

The RI Forest Conservator's Organization is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and wise use of Rhode Island's forest resources. RIFCO is also a co-sponsor of the RI Tree Farm Program, and an affiliate of the National Woodland Owner's Association. To sign up for RIFCO's monthly e-news, visit us at www.rifco.org.

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