

**RI FOREST CONSERVATOR'S ORGANIZATION (RIFCO)  
WOODLAND OWNER WORKSHOP SERIES  
West Greenwich Community Center, 274 Victory Highway, West Greenwich  
2026 PROGRAM AGENDA**

WEEK ONE: February 7, 2026 9 – NOON

**Forest Conservation Strategies and Old Growth Forest Ecology**

**Session 1:** Rare Species, Natural Heritage Areas, and Biodiversity

David W. Gregg, PhD, Executive Director, RI Natural History Survey

**Session 2:** Old Growth Characteristics, History, & Ecology

Fern Graves, CE, RI DEM Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator



**Session 3:** RI DEM's Forest Stewardship & Invasive Plant Control Programs

Nancy Stairs, RI DEM Cooperative Forestry Program Supervisor

WEEK TWO: February 14, 2026 9 - NOON

**BIOCHAR: Its Production and Its Uses**

**Session 4:** Biochar: What it is and Why it Matters

Jeanne Heston, Director of Marketing & Communication, Quonset Soil Solutions



**Session 5:** Biochar Benefits: What the Science Says

Dr. Rebecca Nelson Brown  
Professor of Plant Sciences – Sustainable Agriculture

**Session 6:** Practical Applications of Biochar on a Small RI Farm

Gina Thurn, Our Kids Farm, Exeter, RI



WEEK THREE: February 21, 2026 9 - NOON  
**Co-sponsored by the RI Tree Farm Program**

Wildlife Habitat: The various stages of Forest Growth

**Session 7:** Young Forest habitat – Benefits and Establishment

Scott Ruhren, PhD, Audubon Society of RI

**Session 8:** Forest Management Options with Habitat Objectives

Chris Modisette, USDA-NRCS & Christopher Riely, URI

**Session 9:** Mature forest habitat – Benefits and Enhancement

Laura Green, Yale University, Invited

