

**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

