

**Buck Hill Management Area
RI Department of Environmental Management
Burrillville, Rhode Island**



The mixed deciduous cuts of Buck Hill bear both woody and herbaceous vegetation, with shrubby undergrowth consisting of berry-producing shrubs, ferns and wildflowers.

Introduction

This site, which is owned and managed by RIDEM, includes three clearcuts with a total area of 21 acres. The cuts were established in 2008 and currently contain very diverse vegetation. Visiting the first cut requires a 0.8 mile hike from the parking lot along a gated access road.

Access

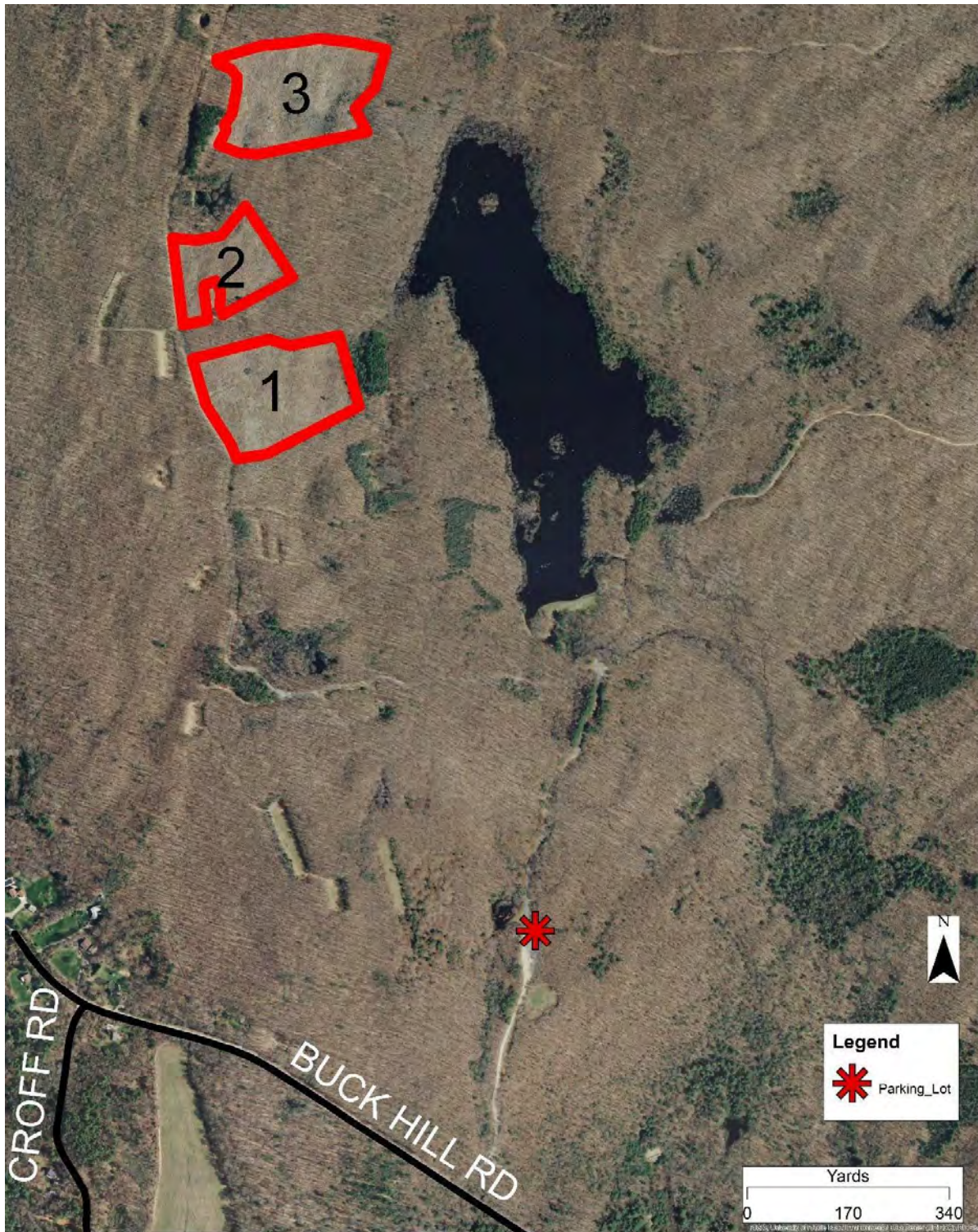
The site can be reached by an access road off Buck Hill Road, 0.5 miles east of the border with Connecticut.



As you drive west on Buck Hill Road, look for a dirt road heading north 0.65 miles west of the intersection with Cod Farm Brook Road. Drive up the access road 0.25 miles and you will reach the parking lot. From there you must walk 0.8 miles to reach the first clearcut.



During hunting season, all visitors should wear fluorescent orange clothing (for RIDEM regulations about clothing during hunting season, see <http://www.eregulations.com/rhodeisland/hunting/general-information>).



Access to cuts are off the main left-bearing access road and occur sequentially, offering easy access.

Description of Cut 1 (8.1 acres)

A trail system crosses the first cut, allowing easy access. The forest surrounding the first clearcut includes mixed oak to the north and west; black oak/red maple/chestnut to the south; and white pine to the east. Inside the clearcut, the regenerating vegetation ranges in height from 10-15 feet (as of 2017) with some areas of lower blueberry and huckleberry thickets. Other species include big tooth aspen, black oak, blackberry, chestnut, gray birch, red maple, slippery elm, sweet fern and white pine. There is also a small amount of Japanese barberry, an invasive species. When this area was clearcut, no snag or mast trees were retained. At present, there is very limited slash on the ground; it appears that the slash was collected in a few concentrated piles.

During a visit in 2017, the following wildlife species were observed: downy woodpecker, eastern phoebe, eastern towhee, pileated woodpecker, red fox, short-tailed shrew, southern flying squirrel, whippoorwill and white tailed deer.



Clearings occur throughout the cuts, dominated by low shrubby undergrowth.



Small concentrations of slash occur in limited quantities within the cut.



The access road provides immediate and easy access to all three cuts.



A diverse array of species make up the composition of the cut, containing several species of trees, shrub and herbaceous plants.

Description of Cut 2 (4.4 acres)

Continue up the access road another 60 yards to reach the second cut. The forest around the clearcut includes mixed oak and grey birch, with sweet pepper bush understory on the north side. Inside the clearcut, the regenerating vegetation is dominated by red maple and black oak with a height of 10-15 feet (as of 2017). Other species include blueberry, gray birch, huckleberry, sheep laurel, slippery elm, sweet fern, sweet pepperbush and yellow birch. In the southern portion of the cut, there is also a large patch of cypress spurge, an invasive species. A small amount of slash is visible on the ground. The vegetation density in this cut is lower than in the first cut, especially in the eastern portion of the cut.



The Buck Hill cuts are surrounded by older growth deciduous forest, showing contrast between managed and non-managed property, in both understory composition and diversity.



Gray birch is prevalent throughout the cut, with an understory of berry producing shrub species.



Cut #2 includes a unique area with sandy soils, sparse regrowth, and populated by the invasive plant Cypress Spurge.



The northern portion of the cut transitions into a wetland with increasing concentrations of the wetland indicator shrub Sweet Pepperbush.

Description of Cut 3 (8.4 acres)

Continue up the access road another 70 yards to reach the third cut. The forest surrounding the clearcut is dominated by mixed oak and red maple to the north and south, black oak with some chestnut to the east, and white pine to the west. Inside the clearcut, the height of the regenerating vegetation ranges from 10 – 15 feet (as of 2017), dominated by gray birch and yellow birch, with some areas of blueberry/huckleberry thickets in the eastern portion. Other species include black oak, blackberry, slippery elm, white oak and white pine. Sweet pepperbush is also found in the southern portion of the cut, which includes some wetland forest. More slash is present in this clearcut than the other two.



Cut #3 possesses dense canopy cover in the western portion of cut, and contains features such as reclaimed rock walls and small seasonal wetlands.



A pine stand lies adjacent to the western portion of the cut, where white pine seedlings have begun to grow encroaching on the predominantly deciduous regrowth composition of the main cut.



Heavy slash concentrations occur throughout the cut, with highest density shown here, with wetland pockets occurring in the southwestern portion of the cut.



Canopy height contrast between regrowth in the cut and the original forest stand.