

**Nicholas Farm Management Area
RI Department of Environmental Management
Coventry, RI**



Nicholas Farm is a topographically variable cut, consisting of rocky, hilly terrain.

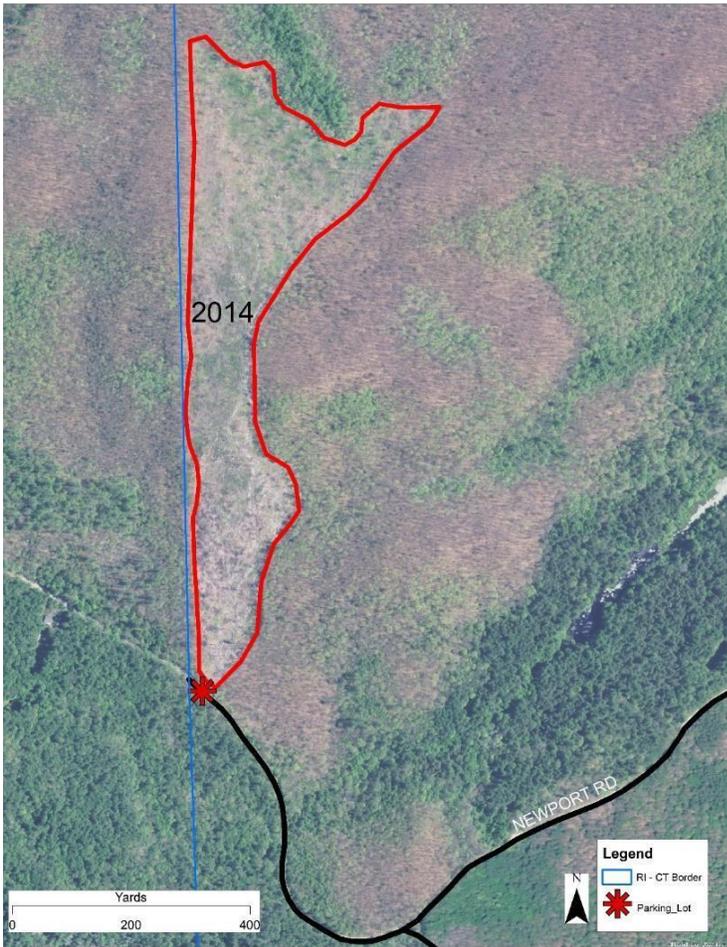
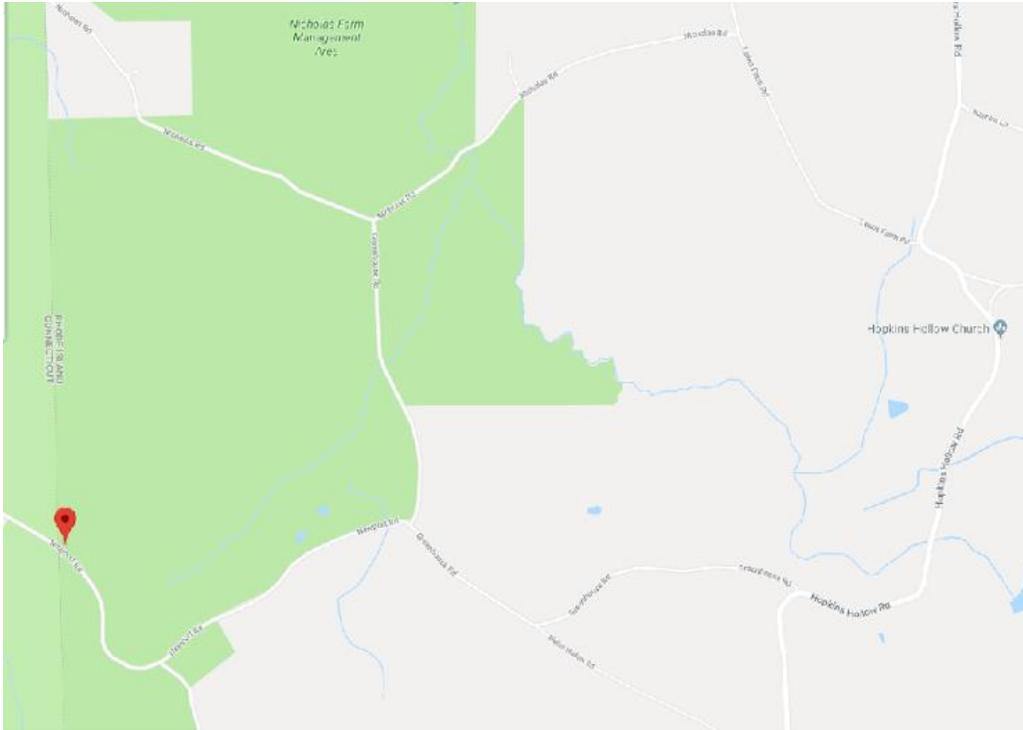
Introduction

This site, which is owned and managed by RIDEM, is easy to access at any time of the year, and offers the chance to view a 35 acre clearcut harvested in 2014/2015 that is still in the early stage of regenerating.

Access

The clearcut is in the southern portion of Nicholas Farm Management Area. It is just north of Newport Road, where the road crosses the RI border with Connecticut. There are several ways to reach Newport Road from Rt 102, including one route that passes through Connecticut and then back into RI.

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>).



You can park on the side of Newport Road next to the clearcut.



A small dirt parking lot is a directly accessible off Newport road. Parking is limited.

You can walk on a hiking trail along the eastern perimeter of the cut, or you can walk through the middle of the clearcut.



A major hiking trail (North-South Trail) follows the cuts edge as it progresses through varying older growth forest habitat types.

Description

The clearcut is long and thin, generally less than 150 yards wide (east-west) but more 1,000 yards long (north-south). The surrounding forests to the east, west and north are dominated by mixed oak and white pine, and to the south by black oak and red maple mixed hardwoods. Inside the clearcut, most of the regenerating vegetation ranges in height from 2-5 feet (as of 2017), with some bare areas. Many areas are dominated by blueberry and huckleberry, but many other species are present including American chestnut, big toothed aspen, black cherry, black oak, pitch pine, red maple, sassafras, scrub oak, white oak, white pine, and yellow birch. During the harvest, many mature pine and hardwood trees were retained to serve as seed trees and provide mast for wildlife. A large amount of slash was left on the ground to reduce browsing damage from deer.

Wildlife species detected during a 2017 visit included mourning dove, white tailed deer, eastern towhee, red squirrel, white breasted nuthatch, northern flicker, and eastern bluebird.



High concentrations of slash, snags and residual tree stumps are left standing throughout the site.



Due to its young age, understory in the cut contains both herbaceous species and concentrations of woody shrub species characteristic to the earliest stages of forest succession.



Primary woody shrub species within the cut are berry-producing species of blueberry and huckleberry



Large slash elements occur in concentrated pockets throughout the site.



Nicholas farm offers a view of a wide array of early successional habitat management decisions.

Photo credits: Ryan Healey