

# RHODE ISLAND WOODLAND PARTNERSHIP

## *STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021*

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JANUARY 1, 2017



Photos by: Tanner Steeves, Amanda Freitas, RI DEM

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategic plan was produced by a team of dedicated natural resource professionals. Amanda Mahaffey of the Forest Stewards Guild led the writing of the document and co-facilitated the strategic planning meetings. Jennifer West of the Narragansett Bay Research Reserve led the facilitation of the meetings. Christopher Riely of the Providence Water Supply Board coordinated the meetings and communications of the partners. Significant contributions to the strategic planning process and document were made by (in alphabetical order) Tom Abbott, Tee Jay Boudreau, Bill Buffum, Paul Dolan, Bill Fortune, Amanda Freitas, Rupert Friday, David Gregg, Scott Millar, Chris Modisette, Bruce Payton, Amelia Rose, Paul Roselli, Scott Ruhren, Kate Sayles, Tanner Steeves, Doug Still, Marc Tremblay, Will Walker, and Dick Went. All of this was made possible by a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation.



## BACKGROUND

### WORKING MISSION STATEMENT

The Rhode Island Woodland Partnership (RIWP) advances the stewardship and long-term protection of Rhode Island's woodlands to benefit the local economy, ecological values, and community enjoyment and health. RIWP increases the impact of forest conservation measures through education and information sharing.

### HISTORY

RIWP began in April 2013 with periodic meetings and email updates focused on issues of importance to Rhode Island's woodlands.

RIWP is a collaboration among foresters, landowners, conservationists, and professionals who represent public agencies, small businesses, and non-profit organizations. Partnership members share a common goal of advancing the stewardship and long-term protection of Rhode Island's woodlands to benefit the local economy, ecological values, and community enjoyment and health. RIWP has filled a fundamental need of creating a networking space for Rhode Island's conservation community to stay abreast of issues affecting Rhode Island's forests.

The RIWP is ready to grow from a network into a partnership for collective impact.

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## PARTNERS

Current partners include:

- Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI)
- Burrillville Land Trust
- City of Providence Parks and Recreation Department (Providence Parks)
- Grow Smart Rhode Island
- Land Management Services
- The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Chapter
- Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD)
- Providence Water Supply Board (Providence Water)
- Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Forest Environment (DEM-DFE)
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife (DEM-DFW)
- Rhode Island Department of Health, Climate Change and Health Program
- Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization (RIFCO)
- Rhode Island Land Trust Council (RILTC)
- Rhode Island Natural History Survey (RINHS)
- Rhode Island Resource Conservation & Development Area Council (RC&D)
- Society of American Foresters, Rhode Island Chapter (SAF)
- University of Rhode Island, Department of Natural Resources Science (URI)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rhode Island State Office (NRCS)

Potential future partners might include:

- Loggers, wood products businesses, forest-related businesses
- Land trusts, preservation organizations, non-profits that hold onto property
- Advocacy groups with environment as part of their mission, wildlife groups
- State agencies
- RI Association of Environmental Educators, watershed organizations, RI Tree Council, RI Wild Plant Society, arboretums (Newport, Roger Williams Park, etc.)
- State and Private educational institutions, including additional departments within URI





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## KEY PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATION

This Partnership is an informal network of people representing private and public organizations and agencies that develop and implement a shared forest conservation vision within Rhode Island.

Together, these groups work to achieve conservation on a large scale.

These are the principles by which we agree to work together to achieve our mutual goal of inspiring a culture of forest conservation throughout Rhode Island.

1. **Voluntary.** The Partnership is based on voluntary cooperation.
2. **Facilitate.** The goal of the Partnership is not to dictate, but to facilitate informed decisions.
3. **Mediate.** When disagreements arise, rational dialogue will be employed to work through differences.
4. **Mutually Beneficial.** The Partnership is guided by mutual self-interest – there is something in it for everyone.
5. **Clarify and communicate.** The efforts of the Partnership will clarify terminology, reduce fears, and promote a common understanding of potentially divisive concepts; for example, commercial harvesting, conservation easements, comprehensive plans, data layers on maps.
6. **Multiple Pathways of Progress.** There are no single one-size-fits-all solutions; rather there is a range of items (tools, strategies, actions, levels of commitment) that lead towards keeping forests as forests.
7. **Diversify.** The Partnership will bring together constituencies with similar interests that may not have traditionally worked together; for example, the land trust community and the forest products and logging industry.



## INTRODUCTION

### WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic plans are collaboratively-crafted documents that capture a systematic assessment of an organization's direction and priorities. RIWP has been gaining momentum and is ready for the next phase of evolution. In this phase, RIWP partners will conceptualize and fulfill a vision through coordinated, strategic action.

### WHAT'S IN IT

This plan includes three key components:

- (1) A one-page Impact Map that summarizes the chief goals and direction of RIWP
- (2) Descriptions for each part of the plan
- (3) A schedule of activities



### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic plan was made possible by a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. RIWP meetings have been coordinated by Christopher Riely of Providence Water, Jennifer West of the Narragansett Bay Research Reserve, and Amanda Mahaffey of the Forest Stewards Guild. This strategic planning process utilized guidance and definitions from the NOAA Coastal Services Center and the Institute for Conservation Leadership.

To complete the plan, RIWP convened six facilitated meetings on February 4, March 29, May 25, October 6, November 9, and December 8, 2016. Each meeting included 10-20 participants and emailed input from additional partners. Through these meetings, RIWP:

- Identified the Target Audience (see Appendix A)
- Conducted an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT; see Appendix B)
- Clarified the working Mission Statement and articulated the desired five-year Impact
- Outlined Enabling Conditions, Objectives, Activities, and Timeline
- Identified Partners' roles and areas of focus

Significantly, the Partnership identified the need for a paid, long-term (likely part-time, initially) RIWP Coordinator to help the Partners to fulfill parts of the RIWP Activities over the five-year plan window. The Discussion section elaborates on the role of this coordinator and future considerations.

## IMPACT MAP

This section includes:

- Descriptions of the elements of an Impact Map
- RIWP's one-page Impact Map
- Graphical and verbal breakdowns of the strategic plan elements
- Details on the Enabling Conditions, SMART Objectives, Activities, and Resources

## ELEMENTS OF AN IMPACT MAP

RIWP created a one-page Impact Map, a visual depiction of how the organization will leverage its strengths and resources and connects core strategies to achieve a clear and tangible impact. The key components of an Impact map are:

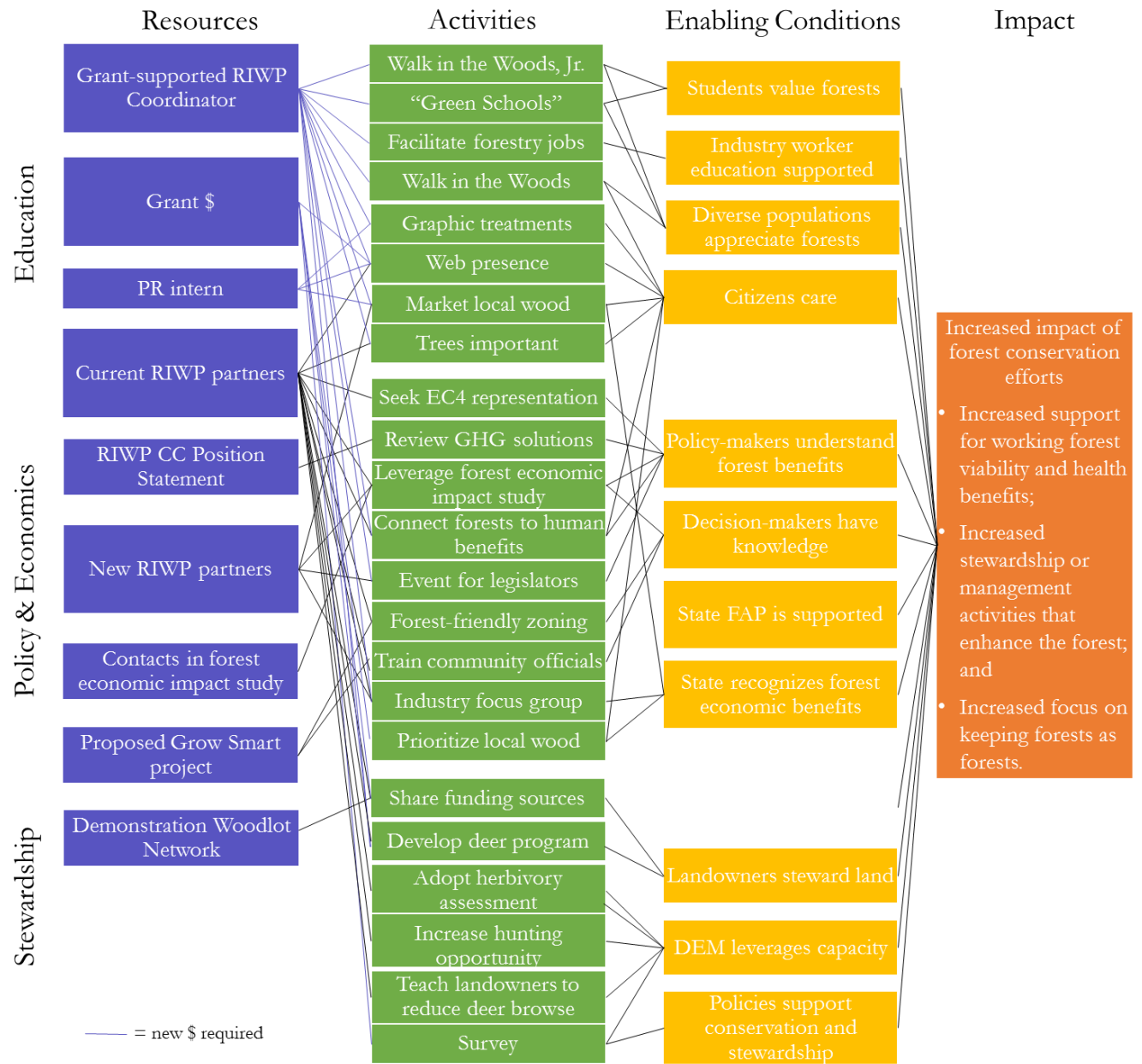
- **Impact:** The ultimate results of your work
- **Enabling Conditions:** The expected results of activities; conditions that must be in place for the desired impact to be achieved
- **Activities:** Efforts designed and conducted to achieve the desired impact
- **SMART Objectives:** Specific, Measurable, Audience- or issue-directed, Realistic and ambitious, and Time-bound (SMART) statements of achievement that articulate *how* Activities help achieve Enabling Conditions
- **Resources:** The human, financial, and organizational inputs needed to successfully execute activities



The Impact Map is created from right to left, starting with the Impact and working backwards into the Resources. To achieve the desired five-year Impact, the Enabling Conditions must be true. The Activities identified by RIWP will ideally be conducted to fulfill those Enabling Conditions. The Resources needed include both existing resources and ones to be added within the five-year strategic plan window. The SMART Objectives (not pictured) are statements that articulate the who, when, what, and how much must be achieved to fulfill the Enabling Conditions. Objectives serve as the basis for determining Activities.

The following Impact Map includes abbreviations that correspond to **bold** text later in this document. Full Enabling Conditions, Activities, and Resources are described in detail in succeeding sections.

## RIWP'S ONE-PAGE IMPACT MAP



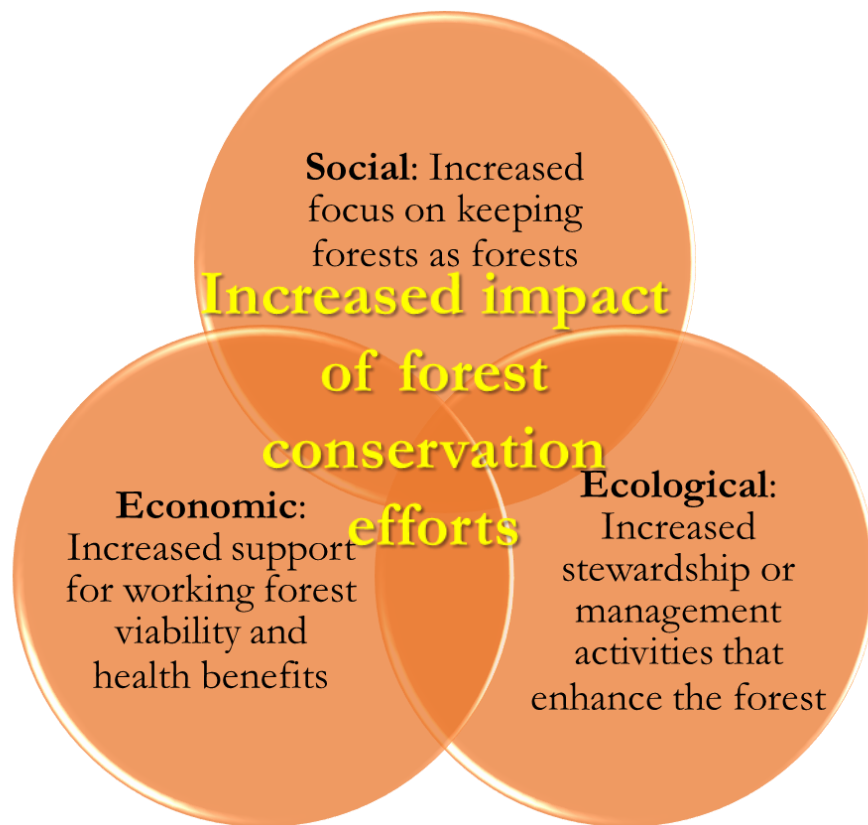


## IMPACT

The Impact describes the ultimate results of the organization's work. It can be seen as analogous to long-term outcomes. Impact articulates the Partnership's answer to a fundamental question:

**What is the change RIWP aims to create in five years?**

### Five-year Impact



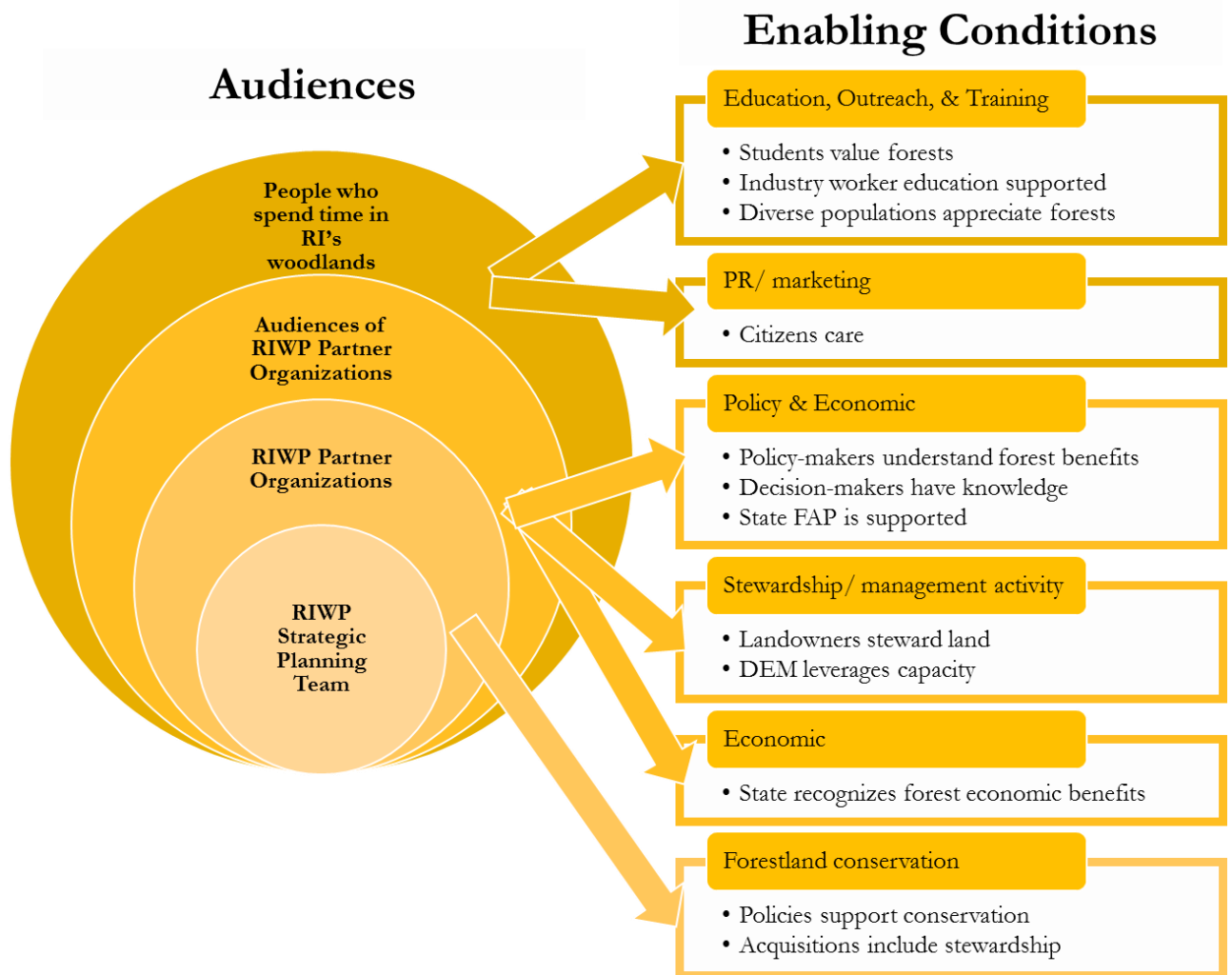
The Rhode Island Woodland Partnership intends to **increase the impact of forest conservation efforts** in the social, ecological, and economic spheres. This includes:

- Increasing support for working forest viability and health benefits;
- Increasing stewardship or management activities that enhance the forest; and
- Increasing the focus on keeping forests as forests.

## ENABLING CONDITIONS

Enabling Conditions are conditions that must be true in order for the Impact to be achieved. In the graphic below, RIWP's Enabling Conditions are grouped by focus area and paired with the target audience of that condition. These focus areas (Education, Outreach, Training, etc.) were identified by the Partnership and help organize the Objectives and Activities needed to achieve the desired Impact. Enabling Conditions address a key question:

**What must be true in order for the desired impact to be achieved?**



In order for Enabling Conditions to be met, certain audiences must be motivated or empowered to change their behavior (see Appendix A). This, in turn, generates the desired increase in forest conservation efforts.

The graphic above illustrates *whose* behavior must change to achieve the desired impact and *what* the change must be. RIWP partner organizations must concentrate on economic impacts and forestland conservation. Audiences of RIWP partner organizations must increase supportive policies and

practices of forest stewardship. People who spend time in Rhode Island's woodlands must increase their appreciation and understanding of forest benefits.

To increase the impact of forest conservation efforts (see Impact), RIWP determined that the following Enabling Conditions must be met:

#### *Education, Outreach, & Training*

- **Students value forests.** A healthy environment is promoted in and out of school, including more forest curricula being taught in schools.
- **Industry worker education supported.** Increased support exists for professional training and technical education for workers in forest-related employment.
- **Diverse populations appreciate forests.** An increasingly diverse population is empowered by education and outreach efforts to visit, appreciate, and/or manage forests, including in their local areas.

#### *Public Relations & Marketing*

- **Citizens care.** Rhode Island citizens think more about forests and their benefits. Public awareness of the benefits of healthy forests will provide the state with better stewards of the natural resources.



#### *Policy*

- **Policy-makers understand forest benefits.** Policy-makers and the public understand the positive natural and economic benefits of forests: Clean water and air, value of forest products growing in woods, benefits of forests in a changing climate
- **Decision-makers have knowledge.** State and local decision-makers have enhanced knowledge of forest land protection and stewardship techniques.
- **State FAP is supported.** Policies set forth in the State Forest Action Plan are supported and implemented.

#### *Economic*

- **State recognizes forest economic benefits.** The full range of products and services related to forests and trees are recognized by decision-makers in Rhode Island. Their economic contributions to the state are acknowledged and valued.

#### *Stewardship/management activity*

- **Landowners steward land.** Forest landowners, including conservation owners, engage in stewardship and land management
- **DEM leverages capacity.** Resources are leveraged to help DEM improve its stewardship capacity.

#### *Forestland conservation*

- **Policies support conservation.** Support exists for policies and practices that advance forest preservation, conservation, and stewardship

- **Acquisitions include stewardship.** Stewardship goals and activities are more frequently incorporated into acquisitions by all types of landowners.

*How* will we create this change? The following section outlines SMART Objectives, Activities, and Resources needed to create these Enabling Conditions and achieve the desired Impact.

## SMART OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES

This section organizes RIWP Enabling Conditions and associated SMART Objectives, Activities, and Resources by areas of focus that emerged during the strategic planning discussions. These focus areas have been grouped to capture overlapping Enabling Conditions and target audiences:

- *Education:* Education, Outreach, Training, Public Relations, Marketing
- *Policy & Economic:* Policy, Economic
- *Stewardship:* Stewardship/Management Activity and Forestland Conservation

SMART Objectives are Specific, Measurable, Audience-directed, Realistic, and Time-bound. They describe *how* Activities will fulfill the Enabling Conditions. This section outlines the Activities that will be implemented to achieve the SMART Objectives, as well as the Resources and lead Partners to complete the Activities.

The **bold** text appears in the Impact Map; the non-bolded text provides the detail for the brief bolded descriptions.



Each Activity includes a Who – Lead. The Lead Partners include one or more RIWP members who are really interested in this activity and are willing to take the lead on its implementation. If the new Coordinator will be helping with this activity, the Lead Partner(s) would be responsible for supervising his/her time on this activity.

Each Activity also includes a Who – Support. Supporting Partners are other RIWP members who are willing to help out with this activity in a small way, but are not able or willing to take the

lead on it and/or commit to making time for this activity whenever needed. Other Partners are non-RIWP groups that might be helpful for implementing the activity and whom we would expect to contact. However, because they are not yet RIWP partners, we cannot make any commitments on their behalf.

Many of the Activities outlined in the RIWP Strategic Plan align with elements of the Rhode Island State Forest Action Plan (FAP), the State's guiding document for forest management. Activities in this Plan are cross-referenced to Goals, Policies, Objectives, and Strategies of the Forest Action Plan with a similar intent. A link to the full document is included in Appendix C. The FAP addresses goals in the areas of Forest Resource Management (FRM), Forest Sustainability (S), Information and Education (IE), Forest Health (FH), Commercial Forest Products (CFP), Water Resources (WR), Forestland Recreation and Tourism (FRT), and Fragmentation (F).

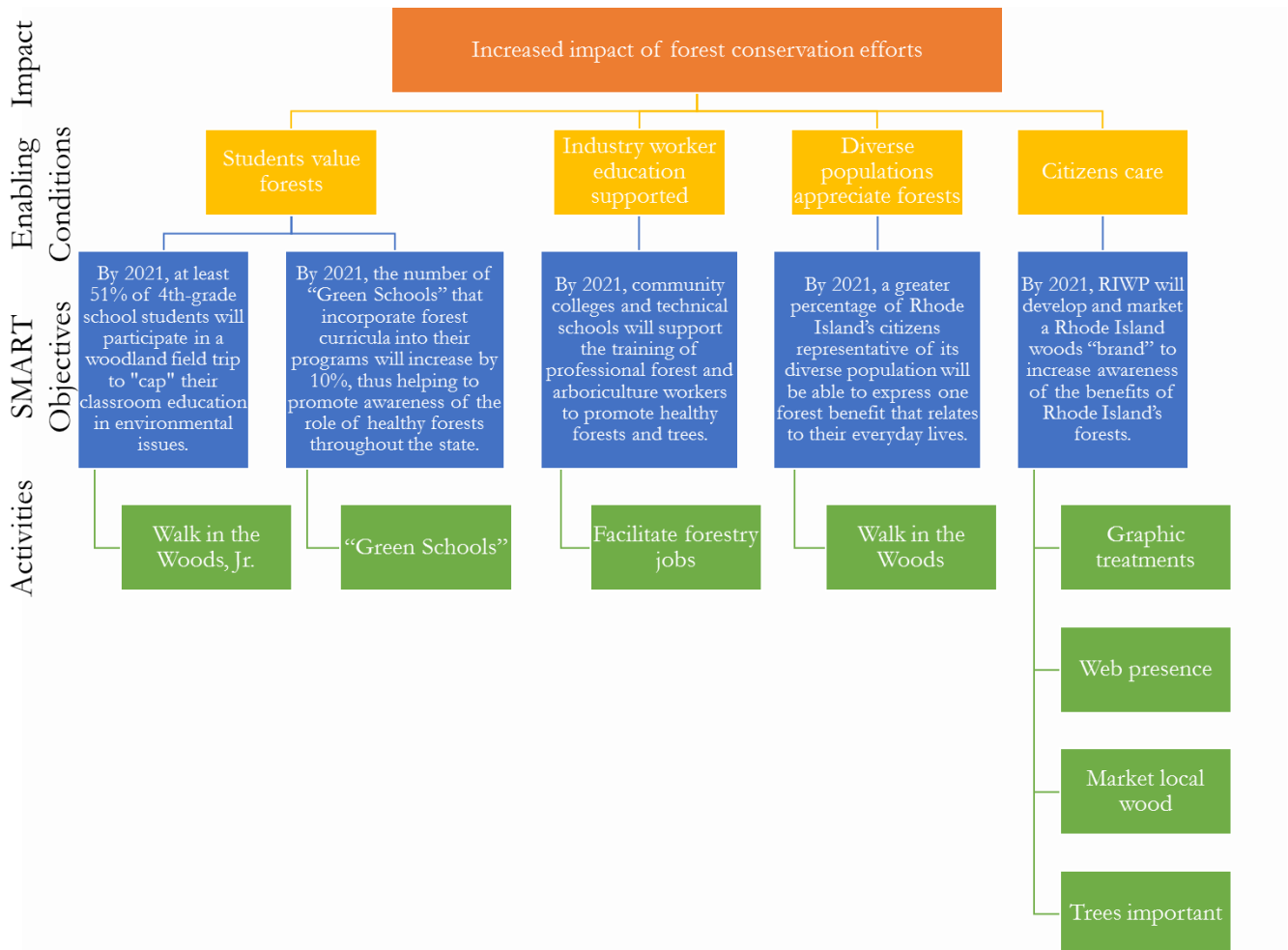


## EDUCATION FOCUS

This section includes the focus areas of Education, Outreach, Training, Public Relations, and Marketing.

The graphic below depicts the connections between the five-year Impact, Enabling Conditions, SMART Objectives, and Activities for this focus area.

### Education Focus Area



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## ENABLING CONDITIONS – EDUCATION FOCUS

### *Education, Outreach, & Training*

- **Students value forests.** A healthy environment is promoted in and out of school, including more forest curricula being taught in schools.
- **Industry worker education supported.** Increased support exists for professional training and technical education for workers in forest-related employment.
- **Diverse populations appreciate forests.** An increased diversity of populations is empowered by education and outreach efforts to visit, appreciate, and/or manage forests, including in their local areas.



### *Public Relations & Marketing*

- **Citizens care.** Rhode Island citizens think more about forests and their benefits. Public awareness of the benefits of healthy forests will provide the state with better stewards of our natural resources.

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## SMART OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES

In order for the above conditions to be met, RIWP will fulfill the following Objectives using the Activities and Resources described below.

- By 2021, at least 51% of 4th-grade school students will participate in a woodland field trip to "cap" their classroom education in environmental issues.
  - Activity: **Walk in the Woods, Jr.** In concert with the Walk in the Woods series, RIWP partners will lead coordinated field trips to connect Rhode Island students with city woods and urban tree areas, as well as native forestland. This could be conducted in concert with the RILTC's Land Trust Days.
    - Resources: RIWP Coordinator supported by grant
    - When: 2021
    - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE
    - Who – Support: Providence Parks, Providence Water, Audubon, RI SAF, RILTC, RIFCO. Other: Project Learning Tree



(PLT), forestry professionals, etc.

- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP1 3 C; FRMP1 4; I&E 1 C, E; WR1 1 A; FRT1
- By 2021, the number of “Green Schools” that incorporate forest curricula into their programs will increase by 10%, thus helping to promote awareness of the role of healthy forests throughout the state.
  - Activity: “**Green Schools.**” RIWP will help to promote the incorporation of an elementary and secondary forest education component to the existing “Green Schools” program.
    - Resources: RIWP Coordinator supported by grant
    - When: 2021
    - Who – Lead: RC&D
    - Who – Support: Conservation Districts. Other: Departments of Education, PLT, LEED, RI Environmental Education Association (RIEEA), Green Building Council
  - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: I&E 1 B, C, E; WR1 1 A, 2 A, 4 A & B
- By 2021, community colleges and technical schools will support the training of professional forest and arboriculture workers to promote healthy forests and trees.
  - Activity: **Facilitate forestry jobs.** RIWP will coordinate with community colleges, high schools, organizations, and agencies in forestry to facilitate outreach and education about forestry jobs, classes, curricula, and related educational opportunities for students at post-secondary educational institutions.
    - Resources: RIWP Coordinator supported by grant
    - When: 2021
    - Who – Lead: RI Tree Council
    - Who – Support: DEM-DFE. Other: Educational institutions, forestry organizations, and wood-based industrial and arboricultural businesses, Groundwork Providence, RI Nursery & Landscape Association, Future Farmers of America programs.
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP1 3 C; FS1 2 D; FS1 4 A, B & C; CFP 18 & 10; WR1 4 A & B, 5 B & D
- By 2021, a greater percentage of Rhode Island’s citizens representative of its diverse population will be able to express one forest benefit that relates to their everyday lives.



- Activity: **Walk in the Woods.** RIWP partners will lead a coordinated "A Walk in the Woods" series to connect Rhode Island residents with city woods and urban tree areas, as well as native forestland. This could be conducted in concert with the RILTC's Land Trust Days.

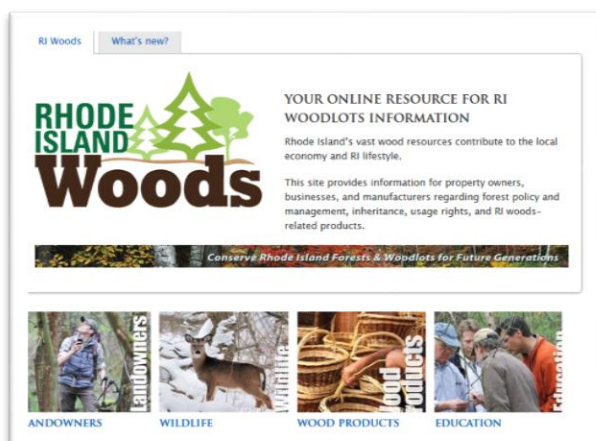
- Resources: RIWP Coordinator supported by grant
- When: 2020
- Who – Lead: RI SAF
- Who – Support: Providence Parks, Providence Water, DEM-DFE, Audubon, RILTC. Other: RI Wild Plant Society, etc.



- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP1 3 C; FRMP1 4; I&E 1 C; I&E 4 B & C; CFP1 1 & 6; WR1 1 A, 4 A & B; FRT1
- By 2025, RIWP will develop and market a Rhode Island woods “brand” to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy Rhode Island forests.

- Activity: **Web presence.** RIWP will increase its web presence by strengthening the [RI Woods website](#) and complementary social media.

- Resources: URI, PR intern, Coordinator - \$20,000
- When: 2017-18
- Who – Lead: URI
- Who – Support: RC&D, DEM-DFE
- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: I&E 1; CFP1 1, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14; WR1 4 A & B, 5 B & D





- Activity: **Graphic treatments.** Design and disseminate a visual “brand” – a series of urban, rural, private and public graphic treatments to help promote RI forests across the state

- Resources: PR intern, graphics artist, Coordinator
- When: 2020
- Who – Lead: Paul Roselli
- Who – Support: Other: RISD and other local universities and colleges

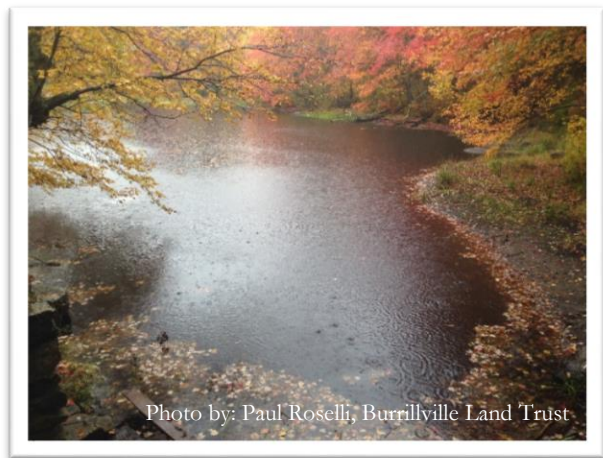
State FAP Objectives & Strategies: CFP1 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, & 14; WR1 4 A; FRT1

- Activity: **Market local wood.** RIWP will explore mechanisms for marketing local forest products, including a RI-grown forest products label.

- Resources: PR intern, RIWP Coordinator
- When: 2021
- Who – Lead: RC&D, URI
- Who – Support: URI, RC&D, DEM-DFE
- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: CFP1: 1, 11, 12, 13, & 14

- Activity: **Trees important.** RIWP will make trees important all year by using news media and other outlets to constantly promote opportunities for citizens to understand the importance of, enjoy, and explore Rhode Island’s woods.

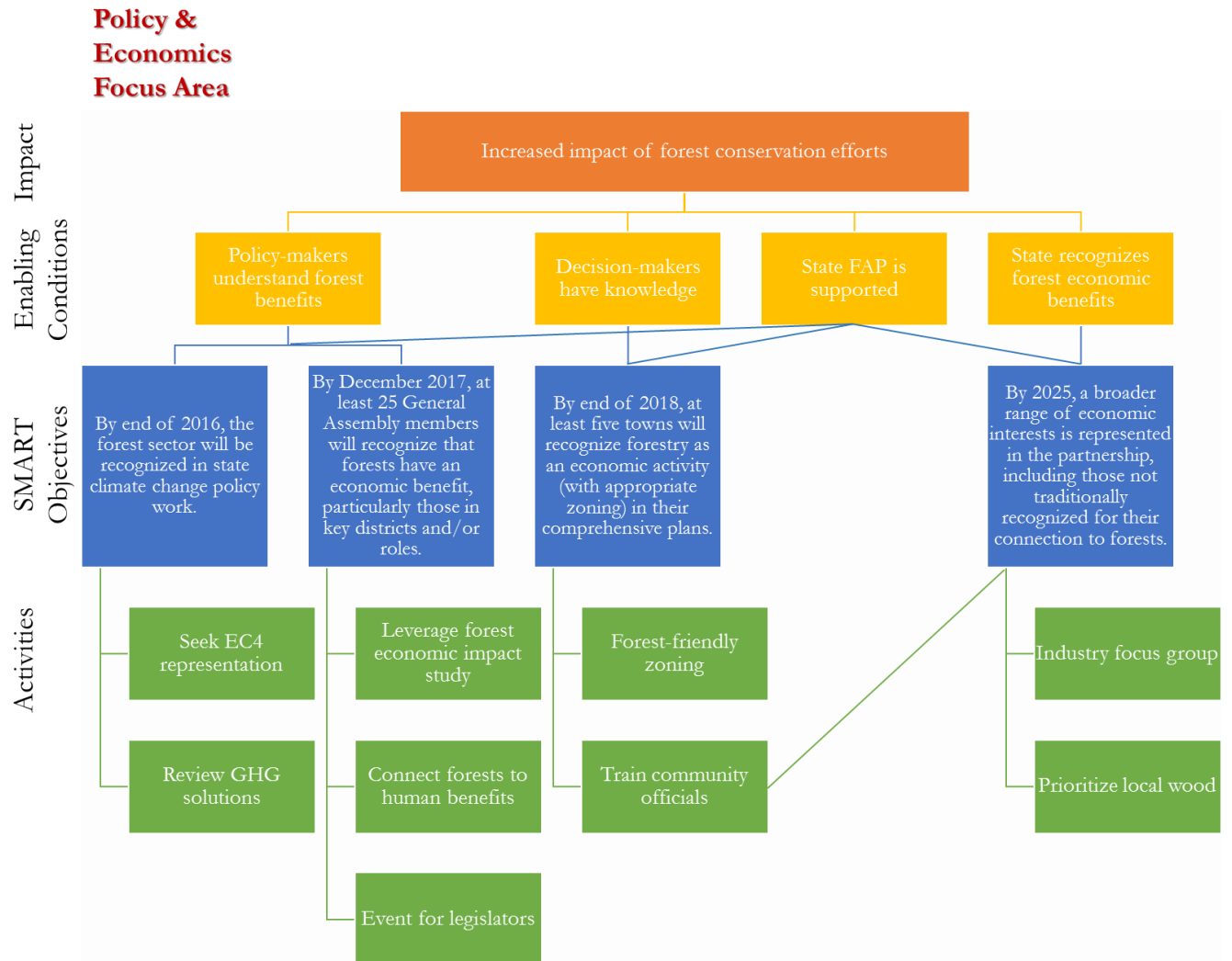
- Resources: Existing media connections of Partners, Coordinator, List Serves
- When: 2020
- Who – Lead: DEM-DFE and DEM communications team
- Who – Support: URI, SAF, RILTC. Other: RI Tree Council
- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP1 4; I&E 1; CFP1 1; WR1 1 A, 4 A; FRT1 F1 6, B 7 A



## POLICY & ECONOMICS FOCUS

This section includes the focus areas of Policy and Economics.

The graphic below depicts the connections between the five-year Impact, Enabling Conditions, SMART Objectives, and Activities for this focus area.



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## ENABLING CONDITIONS – POLICY & ECONOMICS FOCUS

### *Policy*

- **Policy-makers understand forest benefits.** Policy-makers and the public understand the positive natural and economic benefits of forests: Clean water and air, value of forest products growing in woods, benefits of forests in a changing climate.
- **Decision-makers have knowledge.** State and local decision-makers have enhanced knowledge of techniques that protect and conserve forestland.
- **State FAP is supported.** Policies set forth in the State Forest Action Plan are supported by state leaders and implemented by professional staff.



### *Economic*

- **State recognizes forest economic benefits.** The full range of products and services related to forests and trees are recognized by decision-makers. Their economic contributions to the state are acknowledged and valued.

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## SMART OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES

- By end of 2016, the forest sector will be recognized in state climate change policy work.
  - Activity: **Seek EC4 representation.** RIWP will monitor and seek representation on or acknowledgement from the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) through one or more of its advisory boards and committees.
    - Resources: Contacts with EC4, member and allied organizations working on state climate change policy
    - When: 2016
    - Who – Lead: RC&D, New RIWP Coordinator or RIWP member(s) or agreed upon by consensus of active members.
    - Who – Support: Consistent representation from partners
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FH1 1 A, 3 A; CFP1 1, 4, & 10; F1 2
  - Activity: **Review GHG solutions.** RIWP will review and comment on proposed solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure that forests are included in the dialogue and report produced by the EC4's Greenhouse Gas Technical Committee.
    - Resources: State Forest Action Plan, RIWP Climate Change Position Statement
    - When: 2016
    - Who – Lead: Amanda Freitas (RIDEM/RINHS), Christopher Riely (as RIWP Coordinator), Paul Roselli (Burrillville Land Trust)
    - Who – Support: Subcommittee/working group established for this purpose
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FH1 1 A, 3 A; CFP1 1 3 & 10; F1 2

- By December 2017, at least 25 General Assembly members will recognize that forests have an economic benefit, particularly those in key districts and/or roles.
  - Activity: **Leverage forest economic impact study.** RIWP will leverage forest economic impact study by providing each General Assembly member with a copy of the completed report and establishing relationships with key legislators.
    - Resources: DEM-commissioned study, RI General Assembly contacts
    - When: Arbor Day 2017 (April 28). Timing should be coordinated with rollout of economic study by Tom Sproul, to be completed by March 2017.
    - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE
    - Who – Support: New RIWP Coordinator, RIWP members with legislative contacts, Grow Smart RI. Other: Ag Council
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: I&E 4; CFP1 1 & 2
  - Activity: **Connect forests to human benefits.** RIWP will provide information to key audiences in the General Assembly, Commerce RI, legislators and towns about the tie between forests, trees, and conservation to healthcare and tourism and forests' ability to mitigate severe weather events.
    - Resources: RIWP members, existing research and examples
    - When: 2017
    - Who – Lead: NRICD, DEM-DFE
    - Who – Support: New RIWP Coordinator, RILTC, RIFCO, Grow Smart RI. Other: Conservation Districts, Department of Health or local healthcare providers, Outdoor access-minded groups such as Partnership for Providence Parks, Appalachian Mountain Club
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: WR1 1 A, 4 A & B; FRT1
  - Activity: **Event for legislators.** RIWP will explore opportunities to organize an event to inform legislators (rebranding and expanding Ag Day at the State House). Work with agriculture community partners to transform this event into a broader “Agriculture, Seafood, and Woodlands Day.”
    - Resources: Agricultural community partners
    - When: 2018
    - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE, RIFCO
    - Who – Support: New RIWP Coordinator, RILTC, Grow Smart RI. Other: Conservation Districts





- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: I&E 1; CFP1 1, 11, & 14; WR1 1
- By end of 2018, at least five towns will recognize forestry as an economic activity (with appropriate zoning) in their comprehensive plans.
  - Activity: **Forest-friendly zoning.** RIWP will work with Grow Smart RI on efforts to encourage towns to allow accessory businesses on forest land.
    - Resources: Project in Scituate/Foster/Glocester with funding from Providence Water. Grow Smart is also being funded by private donations to help other towns).
    - When: Beginning fall 2016
    - Who – Lead: Grow Smart RI
    - Who – Support: Providence Water, Kendall Foundation
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP2 9 A, B, & D; CFP1 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, & 12; WR1 1 A, 3 B & C; F1 2 A, 3 A, 4, 7 A
  - Activity: **Train community officials.** RIWP will work with partners to expand training to encourage community officials to amend their comprehensive plans to establish a no net loss of woodland policy and adopt applicable smart growth land use techniques to achieve that policy.
    - Resources: RIWP and Grow Smart RI
    - When: Beginning 2017
    - Who – Lead: Grow Smart RI
    - Who – Support: RIWP partners, new RIWP Coordinator
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP2 9 A, B, & D; CFP1 1, 4, & 11; WR1 1 A, 2 A & C, 3 B & C; F1 2 A, 3 A & B, 4, 5 A & B
- By 2021, a broader range of economic interests is represented in the partnership, including those not traditionally recognized for their connection to forests:
  - Traditional primary wood products industry
  - Secondary manufacturing industry (cabinetry, boatbuilding, paper, etc.)
  - Nursery and landscape industry
  - Drinking water
  - Recreation/tourism
  - Other non-consumptive services (e.g. mitigation of severe weather events)



Photo by: Jay Osenkowski



Photo by: Christopher Riely

- Activity: **Industry focus group.** RIWP will reach out to forest industry (conduct a focus group) to see what their concerns are, learn what they are most interested in, and assess potential projects.

- Resources: RIWP and RIFCO members and business contacts
- When: 2017
- Who – Lead: RIFCO
- Who – Support: New RIWP Coordinator
- State FAP Objectives & Strategies: CFP1 2, 3, 10, & 14

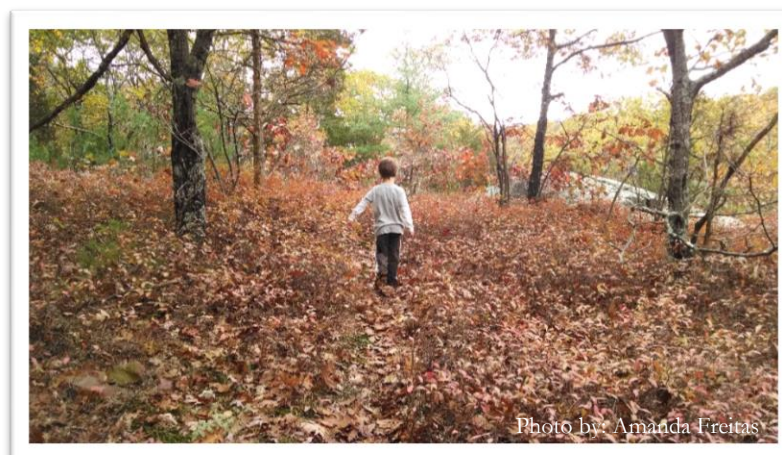


- Activity: **Prioritize local wood.** RIWP will explore opportunities to increase demand for and give priority to local wood products.

- Resources: Grant opportunities, contacts in forest economic impact study, possibly Commerce RI
- When: Beginning March 2017 after review of economic study
- Who – Lead: RC&D, URI
- Who – Support: New RIWP Coordinator, new DFE Federal Program Coordinator (pending)

State FAP Objectives & Strategies: I&E 1; CFP1 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, & 14; F1 7

- Activity: See “Train community officials.”

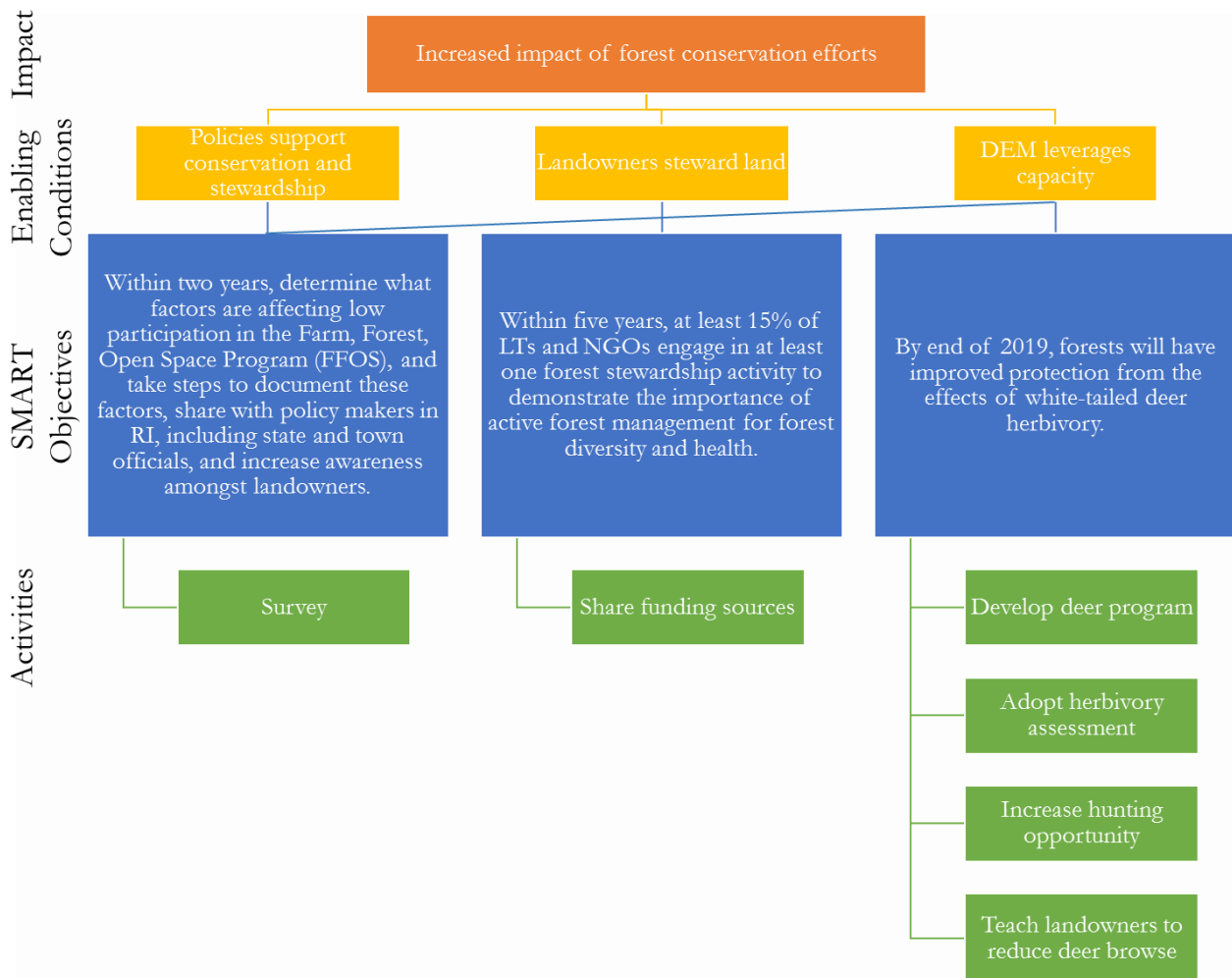


## STEWARDSHIP FOCUS

This section includes the focus areas of Stewardship and Management Activities as well as Forestland Conservation.

The graphic below depicts the connections between the five-year Impact, Enabling Conditions, SMART Objectives, and Activities for this focus area.

### Stewardship Focus Area



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## ENABLING CONDITIONS – STEWARDSHIP FOCUS

### *Forestland conservation*

- **Policies support conservation and stewardship.** Support exists for policies and practices that advance forest preservation, conservation, and stewardship.

### *Stewardship/ management activity*

- **Landowners steward land.** Forest landowners, including conservation owners, engage in stewardship and land management.
- **DEM leverages capacity.** Resources are leveraged (e.g. RIWP partner activity) to help improve its stewardship capacity.



Photo by: Graham Gardner, courtesy of RhodyNative™

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## SMART OBJECTIVES

- Within two years, determine what factors are affecting low participation in the Farm, Forest, Open Space Program (FFOS), and take steps to document these factors, share with policy makers in RI, including state and town officials, and increase awareness amongst landowners.
  - Activity: **Survey.** Conduct a survey, with outreach included, to evaluate and raise awareness of the FFOS program, amongst both landowners and town officials.
    - Resources: USDA S&PF LSR grant? Self-funded by volunteers?
    - When: 2016-2018
    - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE
    - Who – Support: URI, RIFCO. Other: USFS/UMass
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP2 9; FS1 3 A; WR1 3 C, 4 A; F1 3 B, 6 A & B Within five years, 100% of LT's and NGOs are aware of available funding sources for forest-related activities, including planning.
- Within five years, at least 15% of land trusts engage in at least one forest stewardship activity to demonstrate the importance of active forest management for forest diversity and health.
  - Activity: **Share funding sources.** Share updated information on available funding sources for forest management activities and the importance of forest stewardship.
    - Resources: Demonstration Woodlot Network, outreach by partners, activity blog to track projects conducted by land trusts; \$5-10k/yr for coordinator and admin
    - When: 2018 - 2022
    - Who – Lead: Conservation Districts, NRCS, URI
    - Who – Support: RILTC, RIFCO, RC&D, DEM, , RI SAF, RINHS,
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP2 9; FS1 1 C; FS1 2 A, B, C, & D; FS1 3 A & B; FS1 4 B & C; FH1 5 B, 6; WR1 1 A, 5 D; F1 6 B, 7 A



- By end of 2019, forests will have improved protection from the effects of white-tailed deer herbivory.
  - Activity: **Develop deer program.** Develop and implement a DEM Deer Management Assistance Program (nuisance program) to reduce the negative effects of white-tailed deer herbivory at affected sites.
    - Resources: Existing staff at DEM
    - When: 2019
    - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE, DEM-DFW
    - Who – Support: Providence Water, RIFCO
    - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FH1 1 A, 4 A & B, 7 A



- Activity: **Adopt herbivory assessment.** Research available assessment methods, and adopt and distribute a standard protocol for use in RI.
  - Resources: Existing staff
  - When: 2019
  - Who – Lead: DEM-DFE, DEM-DFW
  - Who – Support: RI SAF, RIFCO, URI, RINHS
  - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FH1 1 A, 4 A & B, 7 A
- Activity: **Increase hunting opportunity.** Develop and promote a forum which can unite hunters seeking opportunity with forest landowners interested in harvesting deer; and review existing hunting regulations to identify changes that could increase hunting opportunity.
  - Resources: Existing staff
  - When: 2018
  - Who – Lead: RIFCO
  - Who – Support: DEM-DFE, DEM-DFW
  - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FH1 7 A
- Activity: **Teach landowners to reduce deer browse.** Educate forest landowners on strategies and techniques that can reduce white-tailed deer browse impacts.
  - Resources: Existing staff
  - When: 2017
  - Who – Lead: RIFCO, DEM-DFE, DEM-DFW
  - Who – Support: RINHS, RILTC.
  - State FAP Objectives & Strategies: FRMP1 3 C; FS1 1 C; FS1 2 A, B, & C; FS1 4 A, B, & C; FH1 5 B, 6, 7 A



### COORDINATOR ROLE

Through the strategic planning process, the partners determined that RIWP will need to hire a part-time, paid Coordinator and secure grant funding to accomplish several activities over the five-year plan timeframe. The position could be structured as an independent contractor or an employee of a member 501(c)(3) organization such as RI RC&D. The Coordinator will make use of available RCP Network resources and experience in developing this role. Key responsibilities might include:

- Organize/coordinate logistics of partnership meetings and events.
- Communicate with RIWP members, partner organizations, and other entities. Develop and maintain online presence. Reach out to new partners to ensure the full range of economic interests is represented in the partnership.
- Make use of available Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network resources and experience in developing the Partnership and Coordinator role. Actively participate in RCP Network activities, including annual November Gathering.
- Represent RIWP at relevant meetings and events (e.g. steering committee meetings).
- Coordinate grant applications and funded projects.



In some circumstances, the RIWP Coordinator may also perform project work in addition to the coordination tasks described above.

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### GRANT-FUNDED ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING RIWP COORDINATOR

To summarize the proposed Activities by possible grant category:

#### *Capacity-building*

- RIWP Coordinator time sustaining partnership activity
- Fundraising to support RIWP coordinator time and partnership Activities

#### *Economic study*

- Study statewide resources spent on and economic impact of environmental stewardship

#### *Outreach & education*

- Develop a RI Woods “brand,” including marketing local wood

- Leverage the Demonstration Woodlot Network to demonstrate the importance of active stewardship and management.
- Organize a Walk in the Woods series for RI citizens, focus on adults and families
- Organize student outreach – “Green Schools” and/or Walk in the Woods, Jr. field trips
- Explore facilitation of forestry jobs and higher-ed classes with community colleges and technical schools

#### *Policy advocacy*

- Inform legislators of RI forest benefits
- Work with local officials on comprehensive plans and smart growth to benefit RI forests

#### *Stewardship*

- Support the implementation of stewardship-oriented management practices in RI forests

RIWP will continue to meet regularly and will revisit this plan at least annually. This plan is intended to be a “map,” a flexible guide that will enable the Partnership to adapt to changes in the coming years while keeping sight of its goals.

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## **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

This strategic plan is a “living document” that captures the collective goals, objectives, and desired actions of the Partnership as expressed in 2016. As events unfold in 2017-2021 and beyond, the partners will continue adapt the intent of this document to new circumstances such as changes in the political climate, government agency funding, or unforeseen opportunities.

RIWP will pursue the goals outlined in this plan via the activities outlined. However, if resources allow, RIWP may decide to carry out activities that had been slated for 2021 or later or simply tabled during the planning process.

Ideas worth revisiting in the future include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding outreach activities for K-12 schoolchildren
- Supporting or implementing stewardship activities that address invasive plants, pests, and pathogens
- Supporting or coordinating with a broader effort to map and prioritize Rhode Island’s forested natural communities for conservation

The Partnership also looks forward to celebrating its successes in increasing the impact of forest conservation efforts in Rhode Island’s woodlands in the next five years.



Photo by:  
Paul Roselli, Burrillville Land Trust

## TIMELINE/SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

### 2016

- Seek EC4 representation
- Review GHG solutions
- Forest-friendly zoning

### 2017

- Leverage forest economic impact study
- Connect forests to human benefits
- Train community officials
- Industry focus group
- Prioritize local wood
- Teach landowners to reduce deer browse

### 2018

- Event for legislators
- Web presence
- Survey
- Share funding sources

### 2019

- Develop deer program
- Adopt herbivory assessment
- Increase hunting opportunity

### 2020

- Graphic treatments
- Trees important

### 2021 AND BEYOND

- Walk in the Woods
- Walk in the Woods, Jr.
- Green Schools
- Facilitate forestry jobs
- Market local wood

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: RIWP AUDIENCES

#### People who spend time in RI's woodlands

- Forest products consumers
- Schools, environmental educational programs, youth groups, summer camps
- Climate groups that benefit from forests
- Forest managers, including urban forests
- Residents, including suburban and urban

#### Audiences of RIWP Partner Organizations

- Policy-makers
- Law-makers/legislators (elected officials)
- Federal, state, and local decision-makers including town councils, planning boards, town managers
- Disengaged private woodland owners, Small forestland owners
- Funders

#### RIWP Partner Organizations

- Current list (see “Partners” in Background section)
- Potential additions that address the RIWP mission:
  - Loggers, wood products businesses, forest-related businesses
  - land trusts, preservation organizations, non-profits that hold onto property
  - advocacy groups with environment as part of their mission, wildlife groups
  - state agencies

#### RIWP Strategic Planning Team

- Partners engaged in planning meetings and providing input to strategic planning process

## APPENDIX B: SWOT ANALYSIS

The table below summarizes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified by RIWP at the February 25, 2016 strategic planning meeting.

### STRENGTHS

- Experts
- Passion
- Local ag movement non-GMO - Movement for all-natural products
  - Trends - recreation/outdoors. National parks adoption movement
- Smallest state
  - Small state allows ability to identify tasks comprehensively
  - Unique ability to visualize things and identify tangible tasks in a way other states can't take on.
- Strength of existing partnerships in RI
  - Access to environmental groups (lots)
- Already have lots of plans (stuff)
- Interest/momentum in native species
- Existing research
- Strong public support for land preservation in RI
- Many benefits to forest preservation & stewardship

### WEAKNESSES

- Limited in-house technology skills to spread the message
- Few people know that the partnership exists
- Lack of PR/marketing skills
  - No concise message to share regarding RI forest at this time
- Ability to give credit to partnership rather than own organization
  - Identity building - lack of ID or brand
- Lack of funds (equipment)
- Challenge of prioritizing action
- Hard to engage stakeholders
- Limited avenue to express concerns
- Follow-through on existing plans
- Invisible Green Giant - Al Hawkes - Darwin
- Fragmented management
- Lack of clearinghouse for information
- Lots of groups - conflicting messages
- Personnel capacity - Limited capacity to be at the table if we even got a seat at the table. Who from RIWP should join a meeting or group?

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Climate change - Resilient RI Act
- Scale - strength in numbers
  - Small state
- Vision can help generate and direct funding opportunity
- Clear messaging. Get more people on board.
- State FAP - 2010 -> next plan 2020
- For new engagement/messaging
  - Ability to engage/educate many groups/stakeholders
  - Passion & education for audience. Passion can be caught, not taught.
- Relationship with many other topics
- Many natural resource & community benefits
- Preservation in action. Town forests throughout the state. Examples of where good work is done. Resources with practice.
- SWAP

### THREATS

- Lack of focus (of the partnership) - weakness
- Timeliness of addressing threats. Item today. 5 years from now, if we're not organized, there might be a new threat that will override this.
- Complexity of numerous audiences/goals
- Funding
- Uncertainty of data/projections
- Challenge of personalizing /issue/understand; challenge of getting issue to feel personal to people who may not be already connected.. Communication/messaging challenge. How do you get people to care? Threat is that people don't care.
  - Lack of awareness
- No status or authority
- Lack of expert personnel in State. PR. DEM budget slashes, staff reductions.
- Lack of legislative support includes governor



## APPENDIX C: RHODE ISLAND FOREST ACTION PLAN (FAP)

The full Rhode Island State Forest Action Plan can be accessed at the following URLs:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/forest/pdf/assestra.pdf>

<http://www.stateforesters.org/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Rhode%20Island%20Forest%20Action%20Plan%20Five%20-%20Year%20Review.pdf>

Excerpts from the FAP that correlate to RIWP Activities are included in a separate document.

## APPENDIX D: RHODE ISLAND STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN (SWAP)

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/wildlifehuntered/swap15.php>

## APPENDIX E: EC4GHG TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

<http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/climate/meetings2.php>

## APPENDIX F: RHODE ISLAND WOODS WEBSITE

<http://rhodeislandwoods.uri.edu/>