

Some RI Forest History Dates

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| Pre-settlement – RI more than 95% forested Perhaps as many as 100,000 Native Americans occupied New England. | 1930 | Major forest fire burns 34,700 acres in western RI George Washington Memorial Forest in Glocester becomes the first state forest |
| 1691 Broad Arrow Act officially sets aside all white pine 24-inches and larger as property of the King & Queen of England | 1933 | President Roosevelt signs into law an act establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). From 1933 –1942, 63 CCC camps were established on state forest and park lands and almost 100,000 men were enrolled in the program. CCC crews engaged in reforestation, timber stand improvement, fire suppression, insect and disease control , and the construction of roads, bridges, fire lookouts, and recreational facilities that are still enjoyed today. |
| 1767 First state forestry survey estimates that only 31% of the state's land area is forested | | |
| 1820 Prominent Rhode Island textile manufacturer, Zachariah Allen began what is believed to be the first scientific and carefully recorded silvicultural experiment in the United States at a site that is now part of Lincoln Woods State Park. | | |
| Gypsy moth introduced into neighboring Massachusetts | 1935 | RI 63% forested |
| 1872 Arbor Day is founded by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska | 1938 | Hurricane of 1938 causes blow down of large areas of timber. 80 million board feet of timber salvaged. |
| 1876 Franklin B. Hough appointed first Federal forestry agent and in 1878 begins to issue the landmark Report upon Forestry to Congress, a wide-ranging survey of information and issues pertinent to the management of the nation's forests. | 1942 | A major forest fire burns over 24,500 acres of forest land RI Tree Farm Program begins in CT |
| 1887 Bernard Fernow, Chief of the USDA Forestry Bureau advised: "Forests in the strict sense of the word can hardly be said to exist in this state. Although 24 percent is reported covered with wood, it is mostly coppice and white pine or pitch pine, which here and there may be said to rise to the dignity of forests, especially on the western borders." | 1950 | The era of suburbanization and subsequent fragmentation of the forest begins |
| RI 24% forested | 1953 | RI 64% forested. State's timber volume stands at 281 million board feet |
| 1891 Forest Reserve Act empowers the President to create "forest reserves" (today known as national forests). | 1970's | RI 60% forested Oil Embargo results in dramatic increase in fuelwood cutting across the state culminating in the harvest of an estimated 210,000 cords of fuelwood 1982-83, an increase of more than 29 times the 1972 amount (7150 cords). |
| 1905 Transfer Act of 1905 officially transfers oversight of national forest reserves from the U.S. Dept. of the Interior to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and transforms the Bureau of Forestry to the U.S. Forest Service. | 1980's | April 20 – Earth Day Widespread gypsy moth defoliation |
| Gifford Pinchot appointed first Chief of the Forest Service. | 1985 | RI 60% forested Hemlock Woolly Adelgid introduced into southern New England |
| 1906 Rhode Island Forest Commission established. Jesse B. Mowry of Chepachet appointed state's first Forest Commissioner. | 1998 | RI 59% forested. 18,800 acres of forest land lost to suburban sprawl since 1985; RI developed more residential, commercial, and industrial land in the last 34 years (96,000 acres) than in its first 325 years (65,000 acres); Approximately 90% of the timber cut statewide is cut as the result of conversion of forest land to more intensive uses. |
| 1908 RI 38% forested | | |
| 1907-18 Chestnut Blight decimates southern New England forests | | State's timber volume stands at 1,316 billion board feet Approximately 50,000 acres of forestland under the jurisdiction of today's state forestry agency. |