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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY -- NATURAL FOREST PROTECTION
ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Shanley, and Shekarchi

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Findings.

2 The General Assembly finds and declares:

3 (1) Rhode Island's natural forests on state lands are a valuable natural treasure of our state's
4 biological heritage, and damage to these forests is destruction of public property and is a harm to
5 all Rhode Islanders.

6 (2) Current Rhode Island laws do not provide protection for public forestland apart from
7 existing wetland protection laws.

8 (3) Rhode Island is the only state in New England that has no state-owned forests protected
9 in their natural state as wildlands.

10 (4) The world is facing a biodiversity crisis where populations of native species are
11 declining at an alarming rate and many species are facing extinction. Native species in Rhode Island
12 are at risk of becoming regionally extinct due to habitat destruction.

13 (5) The percentage of undisturbed natural forests in Rhode Island state forests is rapidly
14 decreasing due to even-age logging operations.

15 (5) The state's management areas allow for unlimited logging and are not designed for
16 forest preservation.

17 (7) Even-age logging operations lead to the spread of invasive plants, and forestry vehicles
18 crush native plants and disturb the soil.

1 (8) Construction on state-owned land, including road construction by the Rhode Island
2 department of transportation, has been going forward without any environmental review to
3 determine if any rare or endangered species, old growth forest, or other rare forest ecosystem could
4 be affected, as well as erosion impacts from removed trees.

5 (9) Old growth forests are significant ecosystems and carbon sinks where native trees,
6 plants, and animals live.

7 (10) Old growth forests are more resistant to wildfire due to the cool, damp forest floor,
8 and lack of wind, from the massive tree canopy.

9 (11) Allowing natural forests to become old growth forests will benefit public recreation
10 from the spacing between trees and lack of underbrush that old growth forests provide which makes
11 these forests easier to walk through and less prone to ticks.

12 (12) Designation of natural area preserves would still allow for hunting, fishing, and other
13 forms of recreation in substantial portions of these state forest preserves.

14 (13) In 2007, the Rhode Island natural heritage program was discontinued.

15 (14) No natural area preserves have been designated since the passage of chapter 122 of
16 title 42 ("natural areas protection act of 1993").

17 (15) It is a matter of public benefit that old growth forests and other natural forests be
18 protected in their natural state as wildlands.

19 (16) Humans have been part of nature for millennia and can coexist within and with
20 wildlands without intentionally altering their structure, composition, or function.

21 SECTION 2. Title 2 of the General Laws entitled "AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY"
22 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

23 CHAPTER 28

24 NATURAL FOREST PROTECTION ACT

25 **2-28-1. Short Title.**

26 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Natural Forest Protection Act".

27 **2-28-2. Definitions.**

28 For purposes of this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

29 (1) "Extractive logging" means the felling or removal of any trees from a forest for any
30 purpose. Extractive logging includes even-age logging operations and selection management as
31 defined in this chapter.

32 (2) "Even-age logging operation" means a logging activity that:

33 (i) Creates a clearing or opening that exceeds one-fifth (1/5) acre;

34 (ii) Creates a stand in which the majority of trees are within ten (10) years of the same age;

1 or

2 (iii) Within a period of thirty (30) years, cuts or removes more than the lesser of the growth
3 of the basal area of all tree species (not including a tree of a non-native invasive tree species or an
4 invasive plantation species) in a stand; or twenty percent (20%) of the basal area of a stand;

5 (iv) Includes the application of clearcutting, high grading, seed-tree cutting, shelterwood
6 cutting, or any other logging method in a manner inconsistent with selection management.

7 (3) "Forestry vehicle" means every vehicle which is designed for and used for forest
8 product operations purposes, and used by the owner of the vehicle or family member(s) or
9 employee(s) or designees of the owner, in the conduct of the owner's forestry product operations,
10 which use shall include the delivery of forest products produced by the forester but shall not include
11 commercial hire for non-forestry product operation uses including, but not limited to, hauling of
12 sand and gravel, and snow plowing, other than directly on the vehicle owner's forest land.

13 (4) "Natural forest land" means any tract or contiguous tracts of land, ten (10) acres or
14 larger bearing a dense growth of trees, including any underbrush, and having the quality of self-
15 perpetuation.

16 (5) "Natural heritage areas" means the mapped rare plant and animal natural communities
17 and locales where rare or endangered species listed in the Rhode Island natural heritage database
18 carry out important life-cycle activities, including breeding, hibernating, feeding, etc. with
19 eligibility questions to be resolved by the coordinator of the natural heritage program.

20 (6) "Natural area preserve" means natural area preserve as defined in § 42-122-3.

21 (7) "Old growth forests" means an old growth forest as defined by the coordinator of the
22 natural heritage program.

23 (8) "Prescribed burning" means the intended controlled application of fire by the
24 department of environmental management, fire departments, or any other agency of the state.

25 (9) "Rare forest ecosystems" means a rare forest ecosystem as defined by the coordinator
26 of the natural heritage program.

27 (10) "Selection management" means a method of logging that emphasizes the periodic,
28 individual selection and removal of varying size and age classes of the weaker, nondominant cull
29 trees in a stand and leaves uncut the stronger dominant trees to survive and reproduce, in a manner
30 that works with natural forest processes; and:

31 (i) Ensures the maintenance of continuous high forest cover where high forest cover
32 naturally occurs;

33 (ii) Ensures the maintenance or natural regeneration of all native species in a stand;

34 (iii) Ensures the growth and development of trees through a range of diameter or age classes

1 to provide a sustained yield of forest products, including clean water, rich soil, native plants and
2 wildlife; and

3 (iv) Ensures that some dead trees, standing and downed, shall be left in each stand where
4 selection logging occurs, to fulfill their necessary ecological functions in the forest ecosystem,
5 including providing elemental and organic nutrients to the soil, water retention, and habitat for
6 endemic insect species that provide the primary food source for predators, including various species
7 of amphibians and birds, such as cavity nesting woodpeckers.

8 (11) "Wildlands" means tracts of any size and current condition, permanently protected
9 from development, in which management is explicitly intended to allow natural processes to prevail
10 with free will and minimal human interference.

11 **2-28-3. Prohibitions.**

12 (a) Extractive logging conducted in a natural area preserve is strictly prohibited, except as
13 provided in § 2-28-4.

14 (b) Any even-age logging operation is strictly prohibited on state-owned land, except as
15 provided in § 2-28-5.

16 (c) No forestry vehicle shall be used in any natural area preserve.

17 **2-28-4. Exception for hazard trees and invasive trees in natural area preserves.**

18 (a) Felling of individual trees bordering trails that constitute a safety hazard as determined
19 by the natural heritage program may be permitted in natural area preserves subject to the approval
20 of the natural heritage program coordinator, and such trees shall remain in the forest and left where
21 they fell, or a short distance from the trail to avoid constituting an obstruction or hazard.

22 (b) Felling of invasive trees that are non-native to the state and threatening to native
23 ecosystems as determined by the natural heritage program may be permitted in natural area
24 preserves subject to the approval of the natural heritage program coordinator.

25 **2-28-5. Exception for authorized construction projects and selection management on**
26 **state-owned land that are not natural area preserves.**

27 (a) Felling of trees for authorized construction projects not in natural area preserves may
28 be permitted on state-owned land, subject to the approval of the coordinator of the natural heritage
29 program and the director of the department of environmental management, and after a public
30 hearing and upon notice as specified in § 2-28-6.

31 (b) Selection management may be permitted on state-owned land that is not a natural area
32 preserve, subject to environmental review, and after a public hearing and upon notice as specified
33 in § 2-28-6.

34 **2-28-6. Requirements.**

1 (a) All extractive logging operations and prescribed burning operations in state-owned
2 natural heritage areas and natural forest land ten (10) acres or larger in size shall be subject to an
3 environmental review by the natural heritage program to ensure no rare or endangered species, old
4 growth forests, and other rare forest ecosystems are impacted. The natural heritage program shall
5 prepare a report of their review to be included in the notice for the extractive logging operation.

6 (b) All extractive logging operations and prescribed burning operations in state-owned
7 natural heritage areas and natural forest land ten (10) acres or larger in size shall only take place
8 after a public hearing and upon notice. The notice shall set forth the substance of the proposed
9 action and describe, with or without legal description, the area affected and shall set forth the time
10 and place of the hearing and shall be published at least twice a week for three (3) successive weeks
11 before the hearing in a newspaper published in the county where the property is located and in a
12 newspaper with statewide distribution. No action shall be taken by the state prior to the expiration
13 of sixty (60) days after the notice is published.

14 (c) The coordinator of the natural heritage program shall designate:

15 (1) All old growth forest stands on state-owned land identified by the natural heritage
16 program in their inventory of natural forest land in Rhode Island as natural area preserves; and

17 (2) All natural area preserves, all old growth forests and rare forest ecosystems subject to
18 the provisions of this chapter.

19 (d) Any challenge to a designation made by the coordinator pursuant to the provisions of
20 subsection (c) of this section shall constitute a contested case subject to the provisions of chapter
21 35 of title 42 ("administrative procedures").

22 **2-28-7. Preservation and protected funding.**

23 Protecting the remaining areas of old growth forests and natural forest land shall be a
24 priority for the State of Rhode Island and annual application to the general assembly by the natural
25 historical preservation and heritage commission for appropriations to fund the natural heritage
26 program, and the department of environmental management for land acquisitions shall be made to
27 carry out the provisions of this chapter.

28 **2-28-8. Penalty for violations.**

29 (a) Any person, firm, or corporation violating the provisions of this chapter or §§ 42-122-
30 7 through 42-122-9, shall be subject to a fine of not less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for
31 each offense.

32 (b) It is the duty of the executive director of the natural historical preservation and heritage
33 commission to conduct the prosecution brought by the coordinator of the natural heritage program
34 under the provisions of this chapter and chapter 122 of title 42("natural areas protection act of

1 [1993](#)).

2 SECTION 3. Sections 42-122-3, 42-122-4, 42-122-5, 42-122-6, 42-122-7 of the General
3 Laws in Chapter 42-122 entitled "Natural Areas Protection Act of 1993" are hereby amended to
4 read as follows:

5 **42-122-3. Definitions.**

6 As used in this chapter:

7 [\(1\) "Coordinator" means the coordinator of the natural heritage program of the State of](#)
8 [Rhode Island.](#)

9 ~~(1)~~[\(2\)](#) "Director" means the director of the department of environmental management of
10 the state of Rhode Island.

11 ~~(2)~~[\(3\)](#) "Natural area preserve" means areas of most environmentally sensitive ~~land and/or~~
12 ~~water containing habitat suitable for plant or animal life or geological features of biological,~~
13 ~~scientific, educational, geological, paleontological, or scenic value worthy of preservation in its~~
14 ~~natural condition which has been approved by the director.~~ [or ecologically valuable land and/or](#)
15 [water containing habitat suitable for plant or animal life or geological features of biological,](#)
16 [scientific, educational, geological, paleontological, or scenic value worthy of preservation in its](#)
17 [natural condition as wildlands, which has been approved by the coordinator with the consent of the](#)
18 [director, except as otherwise provided in § 42-122-9, with eligibility and boundary questions to be](#)
19 [resolved by the coordinator of the natural heritage program. Such determination shall constitute a](#)
20 [contested case as defined in § 42-35-1.](#)

21 [\(4\) "Rhode Island historical preservation and heritage commission" or "commission"](#)
22 [means the commission established pursuant to § 42-45-2.](#)

23 **42-122-4. System of natural area preserves.**

24 ~~The director~~ [Except as otherwise provided in § 42-122-9, the coordinator](#) shall establish a
25 system of natural area preserves and shall have the responsibility as set forth in this chapter for
26 selection of all natural area preserves within the system, ~~and~~ [with the consent of the director. The](#)
27 [coordinator](#) shall ensure that these preserves are maintained in as natural and wild a state as is
28 consistent with educational, scientific, biological, geological, paleontological, and scenic purposes.
29 The ~~director~~ [coordinator](#) shall [also](#) ensure the use of natural area preserves for research and other
30 purposes consistent with the intent of this chapter. The ~~director~~ [coordinator](#) may adopt regulations
31 for establishing and managing the natural area preserve system including, but not limited to,
32 procedures for the adoption and revision of a management plan for each designated natural area
33 preserve.

34 **42-122-5. Procedure for designation of non-state owned land as a natural area**

1 **preserve.**

2 (a) The director may approve non-state owned land as a natural area preserve only upon
3 the ~~recommendation~~ designation of the ~~natural heritage preservation commission (established~~
4 ~~under § 42-17.5-4)~~ coordinator and only after a public hearing and upon notice. The notice required
5 under this section shall set forth a description of the proposed action, including a description of the
6 land to be offered, and the time and place of the hearing. The notice shall conform to the
7 requirements of § 42-35-1 et seq.

8 (b) The ~~natural heritage preservation commission~~ coordinator shall review requests from
9 municipalities, ~~private land conservation~~ environmental organizations, and private landowners
10 desiring designation of a parcel of land as a natural area preserve, ~~and make recommendations to~~
11 ~~the director. Any request must include the written consent of the private landowner before any~~
12 ~~review shall commence. In making recommendations, it shall be guided by the natural heritage~~
13 ~~program and other relevant sources of information about critical environmental resources. The~~
14 ~~natural heritage preservation commission may also, on its own initiative, make recommendations~~
15 ~~for designation of areas to the director.~~

16 (c) To be designated a natural area preserve the property owner must voluntarily grant to
17 the state of Rhode Island a conservation easement, which shall include the reasons for the
18 designation, and prepare a management plan for the preserve that defines the methods by which the
19 educational, scientific, biological, geological, paleontological, and/or scenic purposes of the
20 designation shall be carried out. The conservation easement shall be recorded in the land evidence
21 records in the city or town where the parcel is located.

22 (d) In areas under the jurisdiction of the coastal resources management council (CRMC),
23 the ~~director~~ coordinator shall coordinate with the CRMC areas to be proposed for inclusion within
24 the program.

25 **42-122-6. Procedures for designation of state-owned land as a natural area preserve.**

26 (a) ~~A~~ Except as otherwise provided in § 42-122-9, a request for designation of state-owned
27 land as a natural area preserve shall be made to the ~~director~~ coordinator, that request specifying the
28 area to be designated, the reasons for the designation, the proposed management strategy necessary
29 to protect the critical environmental resources within the area, and the changes that would be
30 required in current management practices. The request for designation may be made by the director
31 of any state agency for any parcel of land under the agency's control. The coordinator shall review
32 requests from environmental organizations and private individuals desiring designation of a parcel
33 of state-owned land as a natural area preserve. The coordinator may also, on their own initiative,
34 make designations of areas with the approval of the director.

1 (b) The director may approve the designation of state-owned land as a preserve only after
2 consultation with the managing agency, and after a public hearing. Notice requirements for the
3 public hearing shall be the same as required under § 42-122-5(a). Before a preserve is designated,
4 a management plan must be approved by the director and adopted by the department managing the
5 preserve.

6 **42-122-7. Designation as a natural area preserve.**

7 An area designated as a natural area preserve is declared to be put to its highest, best, and
8 most important use for public benefit and no interest in this preserve owned by the state shall be
9 alienated or put to any use other than as a natural area preserve, ~~except upon a finding by the director~~
10 ~~in consultation with the natural heritage preservation commission, that the qualifying features of~~
11 ~~the land have been destroyed or irretrievably damaged and that the public purposes of the~~
12 ~~designation have been utterly frustrated.~~ Any transfer of ownership of a state-owned natural area
13 preserve which results in the state preserve land no longer being state-owned is strictly prohibited.

14 ~~Any finding the director is required to make under this section shall be made only after a~~
15 ~~public hearing and upon notice. The notice required by this section shall set forth the substance of~~
16 ~~the proposed action and describe, with or without legal description, the area affected and shall set~~
17 ~~forth the time and place of the hearing and shall be published at least twice (2) a week for three (3)~~
18 ~~successive weeks before the hearing in a newspaper published in the county where the property is~~
19 ~~located and in a newspaper with statewide distribution. No finding, which the director is required~~
20 ~~to make, shall be effective until the finding has been published. No action shall be taken by the~~
21 ~~state pursuant to the finding prior to the expiration of sixty (60) days after the finding becomes~~
22 ~~effective. During the sixty day (60) period, any finding may be appealed by any resident of this~~
23 ~~state in a suit brought against the director in the superior court for the judicial district of Providence.~~
24 ~~In any action, the court shall vacate the finding if it finds the director acted arbitrarily or illegally~~
25 ~~in making the finding. During the pendency of an appeal the state shall take no action pursuant to~~
26 ~~the findings of the director.~~

27 SECTION 4. Chapter 42-122 of the General Laws entitled "Natural Areas Protection Act
28 of 1993" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

29 **42-122-8. Natural heritage program.**

30 (a) Establishment. There is hereby established, within the Rhode Island historical
31 preservation and heritage commission, a natural heritage program.

32 (b) Composition. The natural heritage program shall consist of a coordinator who shall be
33 appointed by the executive director of the Rhode Island historical preservation and heritage
34 commission, and support personnel appointed by the coordinator. The coordinator is required to

1 have an advanced degree in one or more of the following: conservation biology, botany,
2 entomology, zoology, or forest ecology. In addition, the coordinator should have experience in
3 planning or managing natural forest ecosystems for the purpose of preservation through passive
4 management. The coordinator shall not have been previously employed in any capacity by the
5 timber industry, including advertising, legal, or lobbying.

6 (c) Powers and duties of the natural heritage program coordinator. The natural heritage
7 program coordinator shall have the following powers and duties:

8 (1) To find, monitor, and formulate policies and plans and to adopt regulations necessary
9 to implement protections for native biodiversity, natural forest land, old growth forests, rare forest
10 ecosystems, and rare and endangered natural species in the State of Rhode Island, and to carry out
11 the provisions of this chapter.

12 (2) To maintain the natural heritage database.

13 (3) To create a rare and endangered species list in coordination with the department of
14 environmental management.

15 (4) To conduct an inventory of natural forest land in Rhode Island to determine the extent
16 and condition of old growth forest stands, natural heritage areas, and other rare forest ecosystems.

17 (5) To create a detailed, comprehensive GIS map of Rhode Island's natural ecosystems,
18 including species of plants and animals, natural land features, soil, and other data, and which
19 incorporates the established science-based ecoregion system, and the conservation biology
20 principles of core and buffer and corridors, to help identify present and missing native species in
21 various areas throughout the state as well as the presence of non-native invasive species and toxic
22 herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals present in the soil and water that may need remediation.

23 (6) To create a biodiversity protection plan in coordination with the department of
24 environmental management.

25 (7) To designate natural area preserves to be approved by the director, except as otherwise
26 provided in § 42-122-9.

27 (8) To create conservation biology-based forest management plans for the natural area
28 preserves and surrounding buffer areas and corridors with the aid of the maps and data of subsection
29 (c)(5) of this section.

30 (9) To manage the natural area preserves.

31 (10) To coordinate with the department of environmental management on the deployment
32 of forest rangers in the natural area preserves and staff to maintain facilities located in the natural
33 area preserves.

34 (11) To be notified of all felling of trees on state-owned land no later than thirty (30) days

1 before the extractive logging operation takes place.

2 (12) To be notified of any change in land use, as well as any transfer of ownership of state-
3 owned land which results in the land no longer being state-owned.

4 (13) To conduct environmental review before extractive logging operations and prescribed
5 burning operations in state-owned natural heritage areas and natural forest land ten (10) acres or
6 larger in size. This shall include a before and after visual record of the forest areas logged.

7 (14) To prevent, postpone, terminate, or modify extractive logging operations and
8 prescribed burning operations in state-owned natural heritage areas and natural forest land if the
9 coordinator believes it threatens a rare or endangered species or a rare forest ecosystem.

10 (15) To approve felling of trees for construction projects on state-owned land in
11 coordination with the director of the department of environmental management.

12 (16) To retain by contract or employ counsel, auditors, engineers, appraisers, private
13 consultants and advisors, or other personnel needed to provide necessary services.

14 (17) To develop educational materials and to carry out educational programs for the public
15 about the native biodiversity in Rhode Island's old growth forests and natural areas, and the state's
16 natural history.

17 **42-122-9. Designation of natural area preserves to establish natural area preserve**
18 **system.**

19 There are designated the following natural area preserves on state-owned land:

20 (1) Great Swamp natural area preserve. Certain land in the Great Swamp management area,
21 in Washington county, totaling approximately three thousand four hundred thirty-three and two-
22 tenths (3,433.2) acres, located east of South county Trail, south of Kingstown Road, west of South
23 Road, and north of Worden Pond. Not including the logging cuts from 1995 through 2025, and the
24 fields bordering the logging cuts to the southwest.

25 (2) Burlingame natural area preserve. Certain land in the Burlingame state park, in
26 Washington county, totaling approximately four thousand one hundred ten and four-tenths
27 (4,110.4) acres, located around Watchaug Pond, west of Kings Factory Road, east of Bradford
28 Road, and south of Collins Road.

29 (3) John L. Curran natural area preserve. Certain land in the John. L. Curran state park, in
30 Providence county, totaling approximately two hundred ninety-six and nine-tenths (296.9) acres,
31 located west of Laten Knight Road, east of Seven Mile Road, north of Hope Road, and south of
32 Scituate Avenue. Not including John L. Curran upper reservoir.

33 (4) Pawtuxet River Beech Peninsula natural area preserve. Certain land along the Pawtuxet
34 River forming Warwick's western border, in Kent county, totaling approximately fifteen (15) acres,

1 located west of the Interstate 95 airport loop, east across the Pawtuxet River from Knight Street,
2 just south across the river from the intersection of Knight Street and Pontiac Avenue, and across
3 the river south from the Pontiac Canoe Launch.

4 (5) Cocumscussoc Brook natural area preserve. Certain land in the Cocumscussoc state
5 park, in Washington county, totaling approximately four hundred twenty (420) acres, located west
6 of Post Road, south of Stony Lane, east of Thornton Way, and north of Ten Rod Road.

7 (6) Arcadia Beach Pond natural area preserve. Certain land in the Arcadia management
8 area, in Washington county and Kent county, totaling approximately three thousand eighty-eight
9 and four-tenths (3,088.4) acres, located west of Escoheag Hill Road and Woody Hill Road, north
10 of Kenney Hill Road and Spring Street, and south of Hazard Road. Not including the 2020 195-
11 acre Mount Tom logging cut, the 2019 Skunk Hill Road logging cut, the 2017 Summit Road
12 logging cut, the 2022 Frosty Hollow Road logging cut, or the 2025 Dawley Park Road logging cut.

13 (7) Arcadia Black Spruce natural area preserve. Certain land in the Arcadia management
14 area, in Kent county and Washington county, totaling approximately seven hundred thirty-three
15 (733) acres, located north of Plain Road, south of the Alton Jones Campus, west of the 2024 logging
16 cut on Matteson Plain Road, and east of the logging cut on Plain Road where Plain Road goes north
17 at latitude 41.597024, and longitude -71.727768. The preserve includes all the Shelter Trail north
18 of Plain Road.

19 (8) Stepping Stone Falls natural area preserve. Certain land in the Arcadia management
20 area, in Kent county and Washington county, totaling approximately one thousand one hundred
21 seventy-nine and eight-tenths (1,179.8) acres, located south of Muddy Brook Road, west of
22 Wickaboxet Pond and Arthur Richmond Road, and northwest of Plain Road with the
23 Hazard/Lauriston parcel serving as the preserve's southern boundary.

24 (9) Rockville-Ell Pond natural area preserve. Certain land in the Rockville management
25 area, in Washington county, totaling approximately one thousand forty-four and six-tenths
26 (1,044.6) acres, located west of Fenner Hill Road, north of Stubtown Road, south of Spring Street,
27 with the preserve's western boundary being the Rhode Island/Connecticut border.

28 (10) Adamsville Brook natural area preserve. Certain land in Bristol county, totaling
29 approximately two hundred ninety-eight and eight-tenths (298.8) acres, located north of East Road,
30 east of Lake Road, west of Crandall Road, and south of Jacqueline Way.

31 (11) Simmons Mill natural area preserve. Certain land in the Simmons Mill management
32 area, in Bristol county, totaling approximately four hundred thirty-six and five-tenths (436.5) acres,
33 located west of John Dyer Road, north of Amesbury Lane, east of Long Highway, and south of
34 Shuttle Drive.

1 (12) Eight Rod Farm natural area preserve. Certain land in the Eight Rod Farm
2 management area, in Bristol county, totaling approximately four hundred forty-six and one-tenth
3 (446.1) acres, located east of Main Road, west of Southlake Road, north of Harold E. Watson
4 Reservoir, and south of East Road.

5 (13) John H. Chafee Rome Point natural area preserve. Certain land in the John H. Chafee
6 Rome Point Preserve, in Washington county, totaling approximately two hundred forty-three and
7 nine-tenths (243.9) acres, located northeast of Boston Neck Road, northwest of Plantation Lane,
8 and south of Terre Mar Drive.

9 (14) Durfee Hill natural area preserve. Certain land in the Durfee Hill management area,
10 in Providence county, totaling approximately one thousand nine hundred eighty-two and sixty-two
11 one-hundredths (1,982.62) acres, located west of Pine Orchard Road, east of Reynolds Road, south
12 of Putnam Pike, and north of Ponaganset Reservoir, with the preserve's southwestern boundary
13 being the Dark Swamp and the western boundary being the northernmost parcel which Willie
14 Woodhead Road goes through.

15 (15) URI North Woods natural area preserve. Certain land in the University of Rhode
16 Island Kingston campus, in Washington county, totaling approximately two hundred sixty-four and
17 five-tenths (264.5) acres, located north of Flagg Road, west of Old North Road, east of Plains Road,
18 and south of Stony Fort Road. Not including the farm field, parking lot, or solar fields.

19 (16) Buck Hill Wallum Lake natural area preserve. Certain land in the Buck Hill
20 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately one thousand two hundred nine
21 and three-tenths (1,209.3) acres, located on the western and southern edge of Wallum Lake, east of
22 Buck Hill Pond, north of Buck Hill Road, with the preserve's northern boundary being the Rhode
23 Island/Massachusetts border. Not including the 2008 logging cut or the logged nine hundred forty-
24 two (942) acre land added to the Buck Hill management area in 2024.

25 (17) Croff Farm Brook natural area preserve. Certain land in the Buck Hill management
26 area, in Providence county, totaling approximately three hundred fifty-two and three-tenths (352.3)
27 acres, located south of Buck Hill Road, west of Staghead Drive, east of Croff Road, and north of
28 Wakefield Road and Cedar Swamp Pond.

29 (18) Black Hut natural area preserve. Certain land in the Black Hut management area, in
30 Providence county, totaling approximately one thousand eight hundred sixty-three and two-tenths
31 (1,863.2) acres, located around Spring Lake, east of Cherry Farm Road, north of East Avenue, west
32 of the Douglas Turnpike, and south of West Ironstone Road.

33 (19) Blackstone River High Rocks Gorge natural area preserve. Certain land along the
34 Rhode Island/Massachusetts border, in Providence county, totaling approximately ninety-four and

1 two-tenths (94.2) acres, located east of Tanglewood Road, north of Old Great Road, and across the
2 Blackstone River west of Saint Paul Street.

3 (20) Diamond Hill natural area preserve. Certain land in the Diamond Hill management
4 area, in Providence county, totaling approximately four hundred fifty-nine and nine-tenths (459.9)
5 acres, located west of Diamond Hill Road, east of West Wrentham Road, north of Tower Hill Road,
6 and south of Pine Swamp Road.

7 (21) Stillwater natural area preserve. Certain land in the George Washington Grove, in
8 Providence county, totaling approximately eight-five and seven-tenths (85.7) acres, located
9 southwest of John Mowry Road, northwest of Washington Highway, and east of Farnum Pike.

10 (22) Powdermill Ledges natural area preserve. Certain land in the Powdermill Ledges
11 conservation area, in Providence county, totaling approximately fifty-two and five-tenths (52.5)
12 acres, located west of Interstate 295, south of Putnam Pike, east of Sanderson Road, and north of
13 Greenville Avenue.

14 (23) Ponagansett River North natural area preserve. Certain land in the Ponagansett River
15 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately fifty-six and three-tenths (56.3)
16 acres, located west of Pray Hill Road, east of Mount Hygeia Road, south of Acciardo Drive, and
17 north of Hartford Pike.

18 (24) Ponagansett River West natural area preserve. Certain land in the Ponagansett River
19 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately one hundred thirty-one and four-
20 tenths (131.4) acres, located west of Mount Hygeia Road, east of Burgess Road, south of Hartford
21 Pike, and north of East Killingly Road.

22 (25) Ponagansett River East natural area preserve. Certain land in the Ponagansett River
23 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately three hundred ninety and five-
24 tenths (390.5) acres, located south of Hartford Pike, east of Mount Hygeia Road, west of Winsor
25 Road, and north of East Killingly Road.

26 (26) Killingly Pond natural area preserve. Certain land in the Killingly Pond management
27 area, in Providence county, totaling approximately seven hundred sixty-seven (767) acres, located
28 west of Mount Hygeia Road, north of Hartford Pike, far south of Killingly Road, and bordering the
29 eastern edge of Killingly Pond with the preserve's western boundary being the Rhode
30 Island/Connecticut border.

31 (27) George Washington natural area preserve. Certain land in the George Washington
32 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately one thousand six hundred ninety-
33 one and five-tenths (1,691.5) acres, located in the western and central portion of the George
34 Washington management area with the western edge of the preserve starting at the Rhode

1 Island/Connecticut Border along the northwestern edge of Peck Pond, but not the southern edge of
2 Peck Pond with the southwestern edge of the preserve being the 2021 logging cut north of center
3 trail. The preserve consists of the southern portion of the George Washington management area
4 east of Cold Spring Drive to the intersection of Central Trail and George Washington Trail,
5 including the northern edge of Wilbur Pond, but not the logging cut to the southwest of Wilbur
6 Pond. The preserve consists of the northern portion of the George Washington management area to
7 the intersection of Munyon trail and Wilson trail where the eastern edge of the preserve extends to
8 the 2010 logging cut south of Richardson trail and west of Olney Keach Road along Ross trail.
9 Also not including the 2015 logging cut.

10 (28) Casimir Pulaski natural area preserve. Certain land in the George Washington
11 management area, in Providence county, totaling approximately seventy-nine and nine-tenths
12 (79.9) acres, located in the parcel named Burrillville Six-98 which is west of Olney Keach Road,
13 east of Center Trail and Wilbur Pond, north of Putnam Pike, and along the southern edge of the
14 swamp that is directly south of Olney Keech Pond.

15 (29) Jerimoth Hill natural area preserve. Certain land in Providence county, totaling
16 approximately nine and six-tenths (9.6) acres, located south of Hartford Pike, west of Burgess
17 Road, east of Riley Chase Road, and north of Gilead Swamp.

18 (30) Nicholas Farm natural area preserve. Certain land in the Nicholas Farm management
19 area, in Kent county, totaling approximately ninety-seven (97) acres, located along the Rhode
20 Island/Connecticut border and consisting of the portion of the Nicholas Farm Management Area
21 south of Newport Road and west of Hazard Road. Not including the 2018 and 2015 logging cuts.

22 (31) Big River natural area preserve. Certain land in the Big River management area, in
23 Kent county, totaling approximately eight thousand five hundred eleven (8,511) acres, located west
24 of Carrs Pond Road, north of Victory Highway, east of Twin Brook Lane, and south of Whaley
25 Hollow Road.

26 (32) Queens Fort natural area preserve. Certain land in the Queens Fort Historic site, in
27 Washington county, totaling approximately sixty-two and five-tenths (62.5) acres, located east of
28 Lantern Lane, south of Stony Lane, west of Cassandra Lane, and north of Ten Rod Road.

29 (33) Silver Spring natural area preserve. Certain land in the Silver Spring management
30 area, in Washington county, totaling approximately one hundred twenty-six and five-tenths (126.5)
31 acres, located west of Pendar Road, east of Congdon Hill Road, south of Butternut Drive, and north
32 of Pheasant Run. Not including Silver Spring Lake.

33 (34) Nokewa natural area preserve. Certain land in the Camp Nokewa management area,
34 in Washington county, totaling approximately one hundred forty-five and four-tenths (145.4) acres,

1 located east of Tower Hill Road, south of state Route 138, north and west of Gilbert Stuart Road,
2 and bordering the western edge of Carr Pond in North Kingstown.

3 (35) Susanna's Woods natural area preserve. Certain land in Washington county, totaling
4 approximately seventy-three and eight-tenths (73.8) acres, located north of Post Road, west of Red
5 House Road, east of Gravelly Hill Road, and south of Sand Plains Trail.

6 (36) South Shore natural area preserve. Certain land in the South Shore management area,
7 in Washington county, totaling approximately forty-five and three-tenths (45.3) acres, located west
8 of Moonstone Beach Road, east of Robert Frost Way, south of Thoreau Lane, and north of
9 Matunuck School House Road and not including the state-owned farm fields.

10 (37) Woody Hill natural area preserve. Certain land in the Woody Hill management area,
11 in Washington county, totaling approximately seven hundred forty-five and three-tenths (745.3)
12 acres, located west of Ross Hill Road, east of Dunns Corner Road, north of South Woody Hill
13 Road, and south of Woody Hill Road and Canton Street.

14 (38) Crandall Swamp natural area preserve. Certain land in the state-owned portion of the
15 Crandall Swamp, in Washington county, totaling approximately twenty-eight and nine-tenths
16 (28.9) acres, located east of Pound Road, south of Westerly Bradford Road, and west of Dunns
17 Corner Road.

18 (39) Carolina natural area preserve. Certain land in the Carolina management area, in
19 Washington county, totaling approximately one thousand five hundred fourteen (1,514) acres,
20 located south of Kenyon Hill Trail, east of Switch Road, north of Pine Hill Road, and west of
21 Richmond Townhouse Road. Not including the 2017/2018 logging cuts south of Pine Hill Road or
22 any of the Carolina management area south of Pine Hill Road. Also, not including the one hundred
23 fifty-four and eight-tenths (154.8) acre fish hatchery along Richmond Townhouse Road.

24 (40) Taney Brook natural area preserve. Certain land in Washington county, totaling
25 approximately two hundred forty-four and three-tenths (244.3) acres, located west of Del Bonis
26 Drive, east of Richmond Townhouse Road, south of Kingstown Road, and north of Shannock Hill
27 Road.

28 (41) Alton Jones natural area preserve. Certain land in the URI Alton Jones Campus, in
29 Kent county, totaling approximately five hundred ninety-four (594) acres, located in the eastern
30 portion of the campus from the eastern edge of the logging cuts near the western edge of
31 Eisenhower Lake and Parker Lane east to Poor Farm Road and including the Alton Jones Campus
32 land to the east of Matteson Plain Road. The preserve goes south to the southern boundary of the
33 campus with the northern edge of the preserve being just south of the fields along Wheatley Road.
34 Not including the 2024 Arcadia logging cut along Matteson Plain Road which extends into the

1 [Alton Jones Campus or the logging cuts dominating the western and southwestern portions of the](#)
2 [Alton Jones Campus west of Eisenhower Lake.](#)

3 [\(42\) Black farm natural area preserve. Certain land in the Black Farm management area,](#)
4 [in Washington County, totaling approximately three hundred twelve and three-tenths \(312.3\) acres,](#)
5 [located west of Switch Road, north of Woodville Road, south of Interstate 95, and east of Woodville](#)
6 [Alton Road.](#)

7 [\(43\) Johnston Interstate 295 Canyon natural area preserve. Certain land surrounded by](#)
8 [Interstate 295 in Johnston, in Providence county, totaling approximately sixty-eight \(68\) acres,](#)
9 [located east of the Pocasset River, west of Atwood Avenue, north of Grand Army of the Republic](#)
10 [Highway, south of Greenville Avenue, with its western boundary being Interstate 295 south and](#)
11 [the eastern boundary being Interstate 295 north Providence Beltway.](#)

12 [\(44\) Snake Den natural area preserve. Certain land in the Snake Den state park, in](#)
13 [Providence county, totaling approximately eight hundred sixteen and eight-tenths \(816.8\) acres,](#)
14 [located east of Brown Avenue, south of Greenville Avenue, north of Grand Army of the Republic](#)
15 [Highway, and west of Interstate 295 south Providence Beltway. Not including the Pallozi Farm or](#)
16 [the state-owned farms along Brown Avenue.](#)

17 [\(45\) Lincoln Woods natural area preserve. Certain land in the Lincoln Woods state park,](#)
18 [in Providence county, totaling approximately six hundred fifty-four \(654\) acres, located east of](#)
19 [Eddie Dowling Highway, north of Olney Pond, west of Barney Pond, and south of Breakneck Hill](#)
20 [Road and Great Road.](#)

21 [\(46\) CCRI/Kent County Beech Forest natural area preserve. Certain land in the community](#)
22 [college of Rhode Island Knight Campus, in Kent county, totaling approximately four and eight-](#)
23 [tenths \(4.8\) acres, located east of Commonwealth Avenue, west of Health Lane, north of Toll Gate](#)
24 [Road, and south of Keareage Road and the roadway going through the southwestern portion of the](#)
25 [Knight Campus.](#)

26 **42-122-10. Distinction from the natural heritage preservation program as set forth in**
27 **§ 42-17.5.**

28 [The natural heritage program as set forth in this chapter shall be a separate entity from the](#)
29 [natural heritage preservation program as set forth in chapter 17.5 of title 42. Nothing contained in](#)
30 [chapter 17.5 of title 42 shall be applicable to or restrict the natural heritage program as set forth in](#)
31 [this chapter.](#)

32 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC004991
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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY -- NATURAL FOREST PROTECTION
ACT

1 This act would protect Rhode Island natural forests by banning extractive and even-age
2 logging on state lands and preserves, allowing only limited safety, invasive removal, or selection
3 management after review, hearings, and fines for violations.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC004991
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