



Update on Woodcutting Stewards Program Winter 2023-24

The NBNERR Woodcutting Stewards Program will **not** run this winter as it has the past several years. If you are still interested in either helping remove invasive European larch or acquiring firewood for home use on Prudence Island, keep reading.

Although NBNERR will not host weekends for volunteers to cut larch and remove wood in the same way that we did in recent years, I hope to develop a flexible program that supports healthy forests and provides wood and larch poles for island residents. The selection of trees to be removed, the season of harvesting, and the schedule will vary depending on when and where tree removal is necessary to meet habitat management goals and address safety concerns on properties managed by the Reserve.

Please contact me or complete the simple form if you are interested in being notified when there are trees available to be harvested for home use (e.g., firewood or larch poles).

Email me at jonathan.mitchell@dem.ri.gov

In your email, please include: **a)** your name, **b)** your contact (email or phone number or text), **c)** what you would use on-island such as: *larch poles, firewood (hardwood only), or any firewood (hardwood & conifers).*

OR complete a simple form at this web address:

<https://bit.ly/3Ry9x2C>

OR through this QR code:



Jon Mitchell

Stewardship Coordinator
Narragansett Bay Research Reserve
(more details on second page)



More details on future Woodcutting Stewards opportunities

Moving forward I will maintain a list of people interested in larch poles and/or firewood. When there are trees to be removed, I will contact folks about the availability of wood. We would then arrange a time for you to harvest only the identified trees or fallen trees. All wood must be for personal, household use on Prudence Island and is not to be sold or taken off-island.

The changes in the Woodcutting Stewards program are due to shifting environmental variables (such as impacts from a beetle killing pitch pine trees) and our adaptive habitat management techniques.

The urgency of tree removal will guide how I manage contacting folks and arranging time for harvesting trees. For example, a single tree across a road would require more immediate removal versus several trees to be removed in preparation for a prescribed burn several months in the future.

At this point, there is no certainty that trees will be available in any season or year. As the new wood cutting program shifts to a more flexible format, I hope we can align NBNERR's needs to harvest standing or fallen trees with the local needs of firewood and lumber.

Volunteers removing wood will still be required to complete a Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Release and Waiver of Liability form each calendar year. Volunteers will still be required to supply their own tools and personal protective equipment.

No trees or wood, standing or downed, can be removed from NBNERR (RIDEM) property without prior approval from NBNERR staff.

If you have more questions, please contact me at Jonathan.mitchell@dem.ri.gov