

News Release



Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Block Island NWR □ John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove □ Ninigret NWR □ Sachuest Point NWR □ Trustom Pond NWR

50 Bend Road, Charlestown, RI 02813

401/364-9124 Fax: 401/364-0170

For Further Information, Contact:

Nick Ernst, Refuge Biologist, 401.364.9124, extension 19

Janis Nepshinsky, Visitor Services Manager, 401.364.9124, extension 28

For Immediate Release

March 25, 2015

Controlled Burns at Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge to Benefit Wildlife Habitat and Visitors

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct controlled burns at Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, in accordance with an approved Prescribed Fire Plan. The controlled burns will require two to four days, weather dependent, between April 1st and May 23rd at which time the refuge will be partially closed for public safety.

Controlled burns will be performed by a fire management team of professionals trained and skilled in prescribed burning. The burns will adhere to the smoke management guidelines developed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The use of a controlled burn is part of the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex (RINWRC) annual habitat management plan.

The objective of the burn is to restore wildlife habitat by removing thatch, woody vegetation and stands of non-native grasses from areas that are managed for native warm season grasses and plants. Removing invasive, non-native plants and woody vegetation allow for the growth of native grassland plants that provided wildlife habitat. Once restored these area provide valuable foraging and nesting habitats for bobolinks, eastern meadowlarks, northern bobwhites, eastern bluebirds, tree swallows and other grassland and song birds. To observe these birds and other wildlife, viewing scopes are available at several refuge observation platforms. Birding backpacks with binoculars and bird guides are also available to borrow at the Complex visitor centers.

Because controlled burning is weather-dependent, visitors are encouraged to call the office at 401.364.9124 during the burn period for any possible trail closures for the day. Visitors can also visit the Complex's website at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/trustom_pond or on Facebook, keyword: Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitat for the continuing benefit of the American people.