



## Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

235 Promenade Street | Providence, RI 02908 | 401.222.4700 | [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov) | @RhodeIslandDEM

### CONTACT:

Mike Healey, 401-258-0787

[Michael.Healey@dem.ri.gov](mailto:Michael.Healey@dem.ri.gov)

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## DEM ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF 61-ACRE PARCEL OF FORESTLAND NEAR BIG RIVER MANAGEMENT AREA PURCHASED WITH U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FUNDING

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is announcing that it has bought a 61-acre parcel of verdant forestland linking two of the state’s largest undeveloped areas south of I-95 with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Wildlife Restoration Grant Program. DEM’s purchase of the Beaudreau property for \$610,000 connects the 8,375-acre Big River Management Area and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island’s 1,233-acre Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge spanning the towns of Exeter and West Greenwich. The three properties encompass nearly 10,000 acres of contiguous protected lands, with the Beaudreau parcel acting as a wildlife corridor and providing further recreation opportunities for the public including hunting.



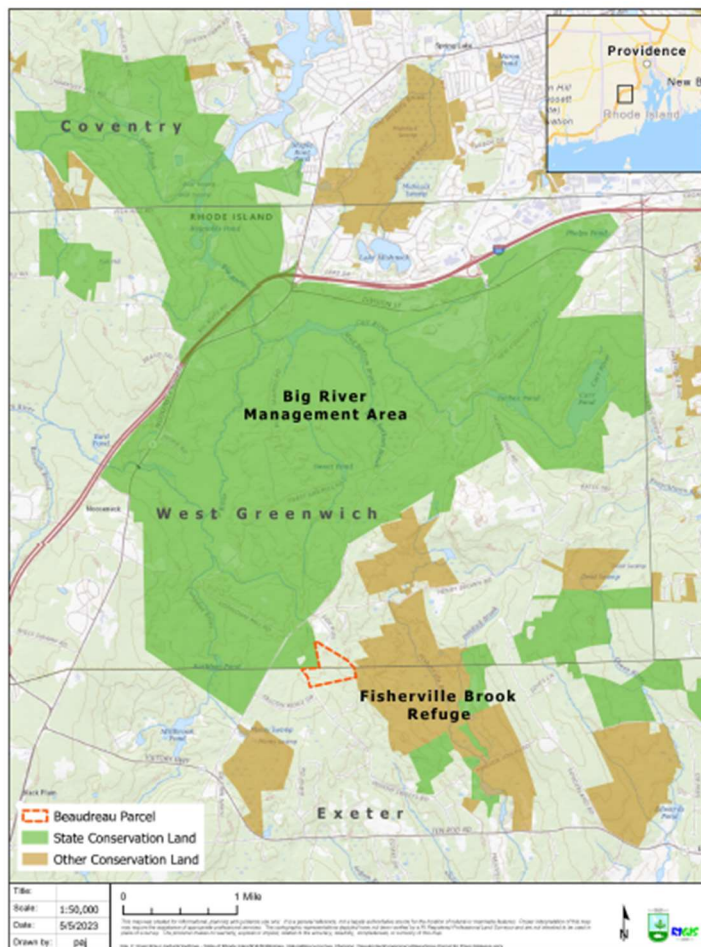
*Photo credits: Lauren Miller-Donnelly*

“Forests perform many valuable ecological functions and are central to state efforts to preserving biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “DEM is grateful for the support of Rhode Island and visiting hunters whose firearms and ammunition purchased in the state are taxed expressly for the purpose of funding the conservation of critical habitats like this.”

[USFWS’s Wildlife Restoration Grant Program, also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act](#), is a user-pay, user-benefit program investing dollars from excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment to support wildlife restoration and conservation programs. The acquisition of the Beaudreau property typifies

the success of this program in creating additional recreational opportunities for the public and conserving critical habitat.

The [State Land Conservation Program](#) purchases ecologically valuable land to enhance DEM's management areas, parks, and forest lands. Funding for these acquisitions is made possible by State Open Space Bonds, with contributions from municipalities, land trusts, and from various federal programs. The program works to acquire land to add to DEM's conservation holdings – to protect state forests and open spaces for public recreational use and habitat conservation. Rhode Island's wealth of historic parks, bikeways, and green spaces provide for public enjoyment, along with improving the health of the environment, strengthening climate resilience, and supporting the economy. Since 1985, over 20,000 acres of land have been protected. In fiscal year 2022, DEM protected 575 acres of open space and farmland while leveraging \$6.4 million from federal and local partners. The Beaudreau acquisition continues this progress and secures an additional 61.5 acres for Rhode Islanders with 100% federal funding.



For more information on DEM programs and services, visit [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov). Follow DEM on [Facebook](#), [Twitter \(@RhodeIslandDEM\)](#), or [Instagram \(@RhodeIsland.DEM\)](#).

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