



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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'TIS THE SEASON TO RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE; DEM COLLECTING 'TREES FOR TROUT' TO IMPROVE WILD TROUT, AQUATIC HABITATS

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is again partnering with the [Rhode Island Chapter of Trout Unlimited \(TU\)](#) on a habitat restoration program called 'Trees for Trout', which collects donated conifer Christmas trees for future projects that improve habitat for wild brook trout and other aquatic organisms. The public is invited to drop off their Christmas tree at a collection event after the New Year.

What: 'Trees for Trout' Christmas tree collection
When: Saturday, Jan. 6, 9 AM-2 PM
Where: [Arcadia Check Station](#),
Wood River Arcadia
Management Area, 2224
Ten Rod Rd, Exeter



DEM is only accepting real trees, not fake ones or trees sprayed with fire-retardant chemicals. All decorations and lights, as well as the stand, must be removed before the tree is brought in. Only whole conifers will be accepted, please do not bring tree trimmings.

The 'Trees for Trout' collection event was started by TU in 2018 to assist in restoration projects to fish habitats in the flowing freshwaters of Rhode Island. The trees are stored outside until the following summer, when they are used by DEM's Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) staff, along with volunteers from

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TU, to build “conifer revetments” where trees are strategically placed along riverbanks to provide stability and control erosion. The trees will trap sediment, decompose, and gradually become part of the banks themselves. The tree branches along the edges of the water will also offer protection for small native brook trout and other aquatic animals seeking a place to hide from predators.

Rivers are dynamic and constantly changing. In impaired stretches of rivers, channels often become wider than they should be and are absent of necessary habitat to support aquatic life. When banks erode, sediment is carried away by flows that fill in pools downstream. Conifer revetments act to stabilize eroding banks by slowing the flow of water and accumulating sediments. They also help narrow the river channel and confine the flow so that there is deeper water during low flows and more habitat for fish.

The 'Trees for Trout' program provides an excellent opportunity for the public to learn about river health, water quality, and habitat for aquatic species. The public should never dispose of Christmas trees in waterways or beaches. A considerable amount of planning goes into deciding where and how to construct these features. Also, permitting is legally required to modify any waterway under the Freshwater Wetlands Act. For information on how to properly dispose of real Christmas trees, please visit the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation’s webpage [here](#). Follow DFW’s Outdoor Education page on [Facebook](#) to keep informed with project updates.

For more information about DEM divisions and programs, visit www.dem.ri.gov or follow us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM), or Instagram (@rhodeisland.dem and @RI.FishandWildlife) for timely updates.

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