

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **THE EXETER FIRE: NATURE'S FURY, NATURE'S RESPONSE RIFCO'S SUMMER TWILIGHT SESSION**

The RI Forest Conservator's Organization is conducting its annual Summer Twilight Woods Walk at the site of the recent Exeter Forest Fire at 130 Liberty Church Road, Exeter, on Thursday, August 10, 2023, from 6 to 8 pm. The evening hike will feature a walk through areas on both sides of the Queen River, on lands owned by Ray & Mary Pezza and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), to view the impacts of RI's largest forest fire in recent memory.

On April 14 of this year the fire, which originated on TNC property on the east side of the Queen River, jumped the river and proceeded northward as a crown fire through recently-thinned pine woodlands, burning about 240 acres before it could be extinguished. We'll view the resulting impacts on the pine woodlands on both sides of the river.

According to Bill Fortune, RIFCO's President and a Foster woodland owner, "We'll review the environmental and economic aspects of such an event, while considering how a changing climate may impact the future of fire management in our woodlands." Recent legislation has created a legislative study commission to review the state's preparedness for such events, with membership that includes RIFCO and the local Conservation Districts.

The response of the ground level vegetation and the future actions to protect water quality in the Queen River watershed, along with forest productivity and the area's wildlife habitat, will all be topics of discussion with our hosts.

The Pezza property is located at 130 Liberty Church Road in Exeter, RI. Signs will be posted at the entrance and will lead you to the parking field.

The RIFCO Summer Twilight Walk is free of charge, and no registration is necessary. For directions to the site, or if you have any questions about the event, visit our website ([www.rifco.org](http://www.rifco.org)), or contact us at [info@rifco.org](mailto:info@rifco.org), or call us at (401) 568-3410.

The RI Forest Conservator's Organization is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and wise use of Rhode Island's forest resources. RIFCO is also a co-sponsor of the RI Tree Farm Program, and an affiliate of the National Woodland Owner's Association. To sign up for RIFCO's monthly e-news, visit us at [www.rifco.org](http://www.rifco.org).

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