



Narragansett Indian Tribe Environmental Protection Program

Spring 2026

Our Mission is to protect, monitor, restore, and regulate the Tribe's natural resources, honoring and protecting all life, land, culture, traditions, and tribal sovereignty. The Environmental Protection Program promotes environmental awareness, provides education and outreach activities, fosters collaborative relationships, and remains committed to the continued growth and enhancement of the program.

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Purpose of the Environmental Program

The Environmental Program is dedicated to fostering awareness and understanding of environmental protection and stewardship across the community. Key areas of focus include solid waste management, pollution prevention, air and water quality, indoor air quality, conservation initiatives, and safe disposal of household hazardous waste. The program hosts Environmental Awareness Events to educate and engage the community on natural resource conservation, environmental preservation, and water quality protection. Ongoing initiatives include monitoring surface water quality in the Tribe's two ponds, managing and analyzing geographical data, and developing strategies to address local environmental challenges. An easy way to begin learning about the environment around you is to visit the United States Environmental Protection Agency website and access the [MyEnvironment](#) portal.

Time of Spring (Sequanakeeswash)



Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

Spring has finally arrived. It is a season of renewal, when our four-legged and feathered relatives begin to stir and move once again. It is the time to prepare and plant crops for the fall harvest, and the season when fishing traditions return to our waters.

Across the landscape, signs of spring begin to emerge. Buds form on the trees — look for the pussy willow and the red maple as they awaken after winter. Listen closely, and you may hear the calls of the Wood Frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) and the Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) echoing through wetlands and forests. Birds sing more frequently as they establish territories and search for their ideal mates, while skunk cabbage pushes through the damp earth as one of the first plants of the season.

This year, we encourage everyone to spend time in the natural world. Listen to the sounds of spring, observe our animal relatives, and explore the forests and wetlands around you. You may even spot a salamander, such as the Red-Backed Salamander (right), often found beneath rotting logs or wood piles.



Red-Backed Salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*)

**FUN
FACT**

Do you know how the "Spring Peeper" received its common name?

The Spring Peeper gets its name from its high-pitched, whistle-like "peep" call and because it is one of the first frogs to emerge and call in early spring!

Earth Day 2026



Earth Day, celebrated annually on April 22, is a global event dedicated to promoting environmental protection and sustainability. Since its founding in 1970, Earth Day has inspired millions of people to take action in support of a healthier planet. The 2026 Earth Day international theme, “*Our Power, Our Planet,*” highlights the important role individuals and communities play in protecting natural resources, reducing pollution, and preserving ecosystems for future generations.

Earth Day also serves as an opportunity to educate and inspire youth about environmental responsibility through everyday actions such as recycling, conserving energy, planting trees, and participating in community cleanups. Spending time outdoors and reconnecting with nature encourages appreciation for the Earth and strengthens our responsibility to care for it.

This spirit of environmental stewardship, community, and cultural connection was reflected in the Narragansett Indian Tribe’s 2026 Earth Day celebration, “*Earth Day, the Native Way.*” The following section highlights the activities, partnerships, and memorable moments from this year’s event.

The Narragansett Indian Tribe’s 2026 Earth Day Event

“Earth Day, the Native Way”

April 22, 2026

The Narragansett Indian Tribe’s Community Planning and Natural Resources Department hosted its first annual Earth Day event on April 22, 2026, at the Narragansett Indian Tribal Farm. The event brought together environmental organizations, community members, Tribal youth, and families to celebrate Mother Earth while promoting education about natural resources, wildlife, and local ecosystems. Rooted in Narragansett cultural traditions and values of stewardship, respect, and reciprocity with the land, the event also highlighted the Tribe’s longstanding connection to the environment and the importance of protecting and preserving natural resources for future generations. Through hands-on activities, educational outreach, and cultural engagement, the event provided an opportunity for the community to come together in celebration of Earth Day and Indigenous environmental knowledge.



Participating Organizations;

- RIDFW Wildlife Outreach Program
- Save The Bay
- Northeast Wildlife Team
- RI Natural History Survey
- RI National Wildlife Refuge Complex
- RI Resource Recovery Corporation
- Roger Williams Park Zoo Education Program
- Audubon Society of RI
- URI Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardner & RI Food Recovery Programs
- URI Dept. of Plant Science and Entomology

The Narragansett Indian Tribe's Earth Day Event, 2026
"Earth Day, The Native Way"



Spring Wildlife Updates and Ongoing Projects

Wild Turkey Tracking and Monitoring Project on Narragansett Tribal Lands

A collaborative project between the RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife and the University of Rhode Island

As part of an ongoing collaborative project between the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Division of Fish and Wildlife and the University of Rhode Island, wild turkeys on Narragansett Tribal lands will be tagged with trackable transmitters and monitored beginning this spring. These tracking devices will allow researchers to study turkey movement patterns, habitat use, nesting activity, breeding behavior, and survival rates. Environmental technicians and graduate students from the University of Rhode Island will conduct monitoring efforts on Tribal lands throughout the spring and summer seasons.

The information gathered through this project will help researchers better understand Rhode Island's wild turkey population, including movement and habitat patterns, nesting success, hatching rates, and overall survival. The Narragansett Indian Tribe is excited to contribute to this important wildlife research effort and proud to support collaborative environmental monitoring initiatives that enhance our understanding of Rhode Island's native wildlife species and their long-term conservation.



Photo: The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Coexisting with Rhode Island's Black Bears

What you need to know this Spring



As spring arrives, increased wildlife activity can lead to more human-wildlife interactions in areas where people and wildlife coexist. Many native species emerge from winter habitats during this season and become more active as breeding and migration periods begin.

The American black bear (*Ursus americanus*) is the only bear species native to the Eastern United States. Although black bears are generally shy and avoid people, unsecured food sources near homes can attract them into residential areas and cause them to associate human activity with food. As black bear populations continue to grow throughout southern New England, sightings in Rhode Island are expected to become more common, particularly in rural areas of Providence, Kent, and Washington Counties.

Most bears observed in Rhode Island are young males dispersing from neighboring states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut. These bears may travel long distances in search of food and suitable habitat, occasionally bringing them into neighborhoods and backyards. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Division of Fish & Wildlife encourages residents to practice safe coexistence with black bears by securing food attractants and remaining aware during periods of increased wildlife activity.

For additional bear safety information and prevention tips, please visit the RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife website and refer to the bear interaction prevention guide included here.

Source: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkqbur861/files/programs/bnates/fishwild/pdf/blackbear.pdf>

TIPS FOR PREVENTING PROBLEMS WITH BEARS

Remove any outdoor food sources such as:

- **Bird feeders:** Only feed birds from November 1st to March 31st when bears are not active.
- **Trash bins or dumpsters:** Trash should be secured in containers and only put out on the curb the morning of trash collection.
- **Compost:** Do not place meat scraps or fatty items in compost piles.
- **Pet food dishes:** Avoid feeding pets outside or bring in dishes at night.
- **Livestock:** Secure livestock in pens or buildings. Certain feeds, especially "sweet feeds," attract bears. Electric fencing should be used to protect chickens, rabbits and beehives. Place livestock, pens and beehives away from forest edges.

Never intentionally feed bears.

It is illegal in Rhode Island, and will create problems for humans and bears alike.

TO REPORT A BEAR SIGHTING

Please contact the
RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife:
(401) 789-0281

In the case of an **EMERGENCY** please contact the RIDEM Division of Law Enforcement:
(401) 222-3070

Source: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkqbur861/files/programs/bnates/fishwild/pdf/blackbear.pdf>

Tick & Mosquito Safety and Information



The most effective way to reduce the risk of tick-borne illnesses, including Lyme Disease, is to prevent tick bites. In Rhode Island, tick-borne illnesses are most often transmitted between early spring and late fall since ticks are most active during warm months. Take action to decrease your risk of infection. Wear a repellent containing up to 30% DEET, check yourself daily for ticks, and limit your exposure to areas where ticks are common.

Rhode Island Tick Species

Cases of tick-borne illnesses in the United States—especially Lyme disease—have been steadily rising for decades. Rhode Island is among the northern states experiencing significant increases, with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reporting thousands of cases each year. The primary tick species found in the state include the Blacklegged (Deer) Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), the American Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), and the Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*). The primary species of concern in Rhode Island is the blacklegged tick, also known as the deer tick, as this tick species transmits pathogens that can cause diseases such as Lyme disease, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis, all of which have been experiencing rising cases and are expected to continue increasing. Of the other human-biting tick species, the Lone Star Tick—once limited mainly to the southern U.S.—has expanded its range northward and is now established in Rhode Island. The American Dog Tick is present widely in the eastern U.S., and warmer temperatures may result in larger populations in the northern U.S. and Canada.



Tick Activity in Your Region:

The University of Rhode Island offers a free online Tick Finder tool that lets you explore tick activity in your area throughout the year. You can access the URI Tick Finder tool here: [Tick Finder Tool](#)

Sources: Center for Disease Control (CDC), RI Department of Health (RIDOH), Tick Encounters, University of Rhode Island Tick Encounters, <https://web.uri.edu/tickencounter/>

Mosquito Safety & Disease Prevention



As warmer weather returns, so does mosquito season. Mosquitoes in Rhode Island can carry diseases such as West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), making it important to take precautions during outdoor activities. Mosquito activity is often highest at sunrise and sunset, especially during the spring and summer months through the first heavy frost of the season.

To help protect yourself and your family, wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, use EPA-approved insect repellents containing DEET or picaridin, and make sure windows and doors have properly fitted screens. Reducing standing water around homes is also important, as mosquitoes breed in small amounts of water found in gutters, birdbaths, buckets, and unused outdoor containers. Extra precautions should be taken for infants and young children, including the use of mosquito netting over strollers and play areas.

RHODE ISLAND MOSQUITO REPORT



AS OF OCTOBER 23, 2025

NO NEW FINDINGS OF
WEST NILE VIRUS

NO EEE DETECTIONS
THIS SEASON



FIND MORE TIPS &
RESOURCES AT

 health.ri.gov/mosquito

CRITICAL RISK

HIGH RISK

MEDIUM RISK

LOW RISK

PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT YOURSELF:

- USE EPA-REGISTERED INSECT REPELLENT
- REMOVE STANDING WATER OUTSIDE YOUR HOME
- WEAR LONG PANTS & LONG SLEEVES AT DUSK & DAWN
- USE/FIX WINDOW & DOOR SCREENS ON YOUR HOME

Upcoming Events



The Narragansett Indian Tribe *Ancestral Wings Pollinator Garden Project*

Help Us Revitalize Our Community Pollinator Garden!
Join our multi-part garden enhancement project focused on environmental stewardship, community engagement, and beautification. Help clean up, plant, and restore a shared outdoor space for the tribal community to enjoy!

Location: Narragansett Church Grounds

Clean up Event: June 5th, 9AM – 3PM & 4:30PM – 6:30PM

Gardening Event: June 19th, 9AM – 3PM

Contact jessica.zeramby@nitribe.org for more information





Narragansett Tribal Farm

**JOIN US AT CRANDALL FARM
105 POUND ROAD WESTERLY
02891**

Date: Sunday June 7th, 2026
From: 8:30am- 4:30pm
Call 401-364-1100 ext. 205
Email: nitfarm@nitribe.org

OUR MISSION

- GARDEN CULTIVATION
- ANCESTRAL TEACHING
- GARDEN MAINTENANCE
- GARDEN TYDE - UP
- PROVIDING FOR TRIBAL FAMILIES

All Narragansett Tribal Members Welcome to come help plant the seeds and plants in our tribal garden
We take pride in having this land to be able to grow and harvest within our community.
Teaching and connecting with all of our generations



Please Recycle When Done!

Thank You!