

Alternative Spring Break – Non-Native Plant Control Program

Program Overview

As elsewhere in the State of Rhode Island, Prudence Island has a number of non-native, invasive plant species which are negatively impacting natural communities. Current NBNERR control efforts targeting autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) are a component of an island-wide effort to control this species in accordance with the Prudence Island Cooperative Weed Management Area (PI CWMA) strategy for addressing invasive plant species. Autumn olive poses a great risk to sensitive coastal shrubland habitat and has been identified as having a high management priority. (Visit <http://www.riwps.org/newsletter-22-02.pdf> to view an article about the PI CWMA in WildFlora RI, the RI Wild Plant Society's newsletter.)

Introduced to the United States from its native range in China, Japan, and Korea, autumn olive was often planted to revegetate severely disturbed areas. On Prudence Island, it is likely that autumn olive was first planted by the Navy to provide a visible barrier to DOD dump sites. There are two heavily infested areas located on the South Prudence unit of the Reserve. Over time, the geographic extent of the infestations has increased and it is no longer uncommon to find scattered plants in the vegetated buffer along the shore and along roadsides.

Autumn olive plants are large multi-stemmed shrubs which may grow to 20 feet in height. These shrubs typically form dense thickets which displace native vegetation. Since cutting of larger plants generally results in thicker, denser regrowth it will be necessary to apply herbicide to the cut stumps. A commercially available herbicide product which is suitable for use by non-professionals (*e.g.* Round-up) will be applied. Individuals who do not wish to handle herbicides will be assigned to other tasks. Young seedlings and sprouts will be hand pulled providing there is adequate ground moisture to ensure the removal of the root system. Autumn olive plants will be hand pulled or hand cut with bow saws and, if possible, chipped on-site. Alternatively, the cut plant material will be loaded in trucks and hauled to a location which is suitable for chipping and / or brush burning.

Control efforts will initially be focused at the most heavily impacted sites. However, if time permits we will target scattered small patches and individual shrubs throughout the island. Future efforts will emphasize the continued removal of large shrubs and resprouts (if this occurs), as well as the removal of seedlings before they are able to mature and produce fruit (generally at 3 + years).

Due to the strenuous nature of this work volunteers will be required to sign a waiver form, which restricts participation to individuals who are over the age of 18. To register, please use the on-line registration form and submit your registration by e-mail. If you experience any difficulty with the registration form, or would like some additional information, please contact Robin Weber (robin@nbnerr.org; 401-683-7369).

Please help us to spread the word. Copy or print an [announcement](#) of this opportunity to post in your dorm, classroom, etc. or simply to share with friends.

Prudence Island Overview

The [Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve \(NBNERR\)](#) is responsible for managing properties on Prudence, Patience, Hope, and Dyer Islands which are owned by the State of Rhode Island. NBNERR managed properties on Prudence incorporates approximately 55% of the land area of the island. An additional 20% of the island is owned by the Prudence Conservancy and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island and is protected from development.

Visitors to Prudence Island will discover that the island has a number of roads and hiking trails which allow many opportunities for exploration. The island is largely forested but also contains a mix of coastal shrubland, salt marsh, and freshwater wetlands. The charm of Prudence Island is in the amount of its open space and lack of commercial activity. Overnight visitors should be prepared to entertain themselves as there is, quite literally, no place to go on the island except for long drives and hikes.

Overnight Accommodations

NBNERR maintains a visitor's cottage that can accommodate up to 12 people. Participants in this autumn olive control program who commit to multiple days of volunteering will be provided overnight accommodation (as space permits). Volunteers may stay in the cottage from the first Sunday afternoon through the final Saturday morning of their scheduled Spring Break or any portion of that time period in which they are participating in control efforts. Individuals who elect to stay overnight on the island for all or part of the program will need to bring their own bedding.

Meals will be provided. However, if you have specific dietary requirements or simply can't survive the day or week without a particular food item, I would strongly suggest that you bring that food item with you. Prudence Island has a small store but there is an extremely limited food selection.

Getting to the Island

The Prudence Island Ferry leaves from the Church Street Wharf (at the intersection of Thames Street and Church Street) in Bristol, R.I. The ferry leaves Bristol daily at 8 a.m. and arrives at the Prudence Island ferry landing (Homestead) at 8:30 a.m. The ferry leaves Homestead daily at 4:00 p.m. and arrives in Bristol at 4:30 p.m. A NBNERR staff member or volunteer will provide transportation between Homestead and the South End work area / cottage for registered program participants.

The Prudence Island ferry serves both passengers and vehicles. If you elect to bring your own vehicle to the island, you will need to make a reservation on the ferry well in advance for both legs of the journey (to and from the island). To make a reservation, contact the Prudence Ferry at 401-253-9808. Generally, the ferry office is open within one hour of scheduled departures from Bristol. Check the [current ferry schedule](#) to plan for your visit.

Volunteers who are coming to the island for a day trip can park on the street close by or in the municipal lot at the corner of Thames and Church St. (but not in the ferry parking lot). If you are leaving a vehicle overnight in Bristol for one or more nights you will need to park a greater distance away. Please pay particular attention to the parking limitation signs, as the Town of Bristol has been known to ticket and tow cars for parking violations (although this is far more common in the summer months). Generally speaking, any distance of 2 blocks or greater from the ferry landing will allow unlimited on-street parking. Please allow extra time (10 – 15 minutes) to find parking and to walk back to the ferry landing.

Round-trip tickets to the island may be purchased at the small kiosk located on the wharf adjacent to the ferry access ramp (furthest end from the street). The cost of a round-trip passenger ticket is approximately \$7.80. Tickets should be purchased at least five minutes before the scheduled departure. Do buy a round-trip ticket in Bristol as ferry tickets may not be purchased at the Prudence Island ferry landing.

Driving Directions to the Prudence Island ferry terminal (Bristol, RI) are on the following page.

Driving Directions to the Prudence Island ferry terminal (Bristol, RI)

From Newport

- 1: Travel north on RI-114/W Main Rd.
- 2: Merge onto RI-24N toward I-195/Fall River/Providence 1.9 mi
- 3: Take the Boyd Lane exit – exit number 2- toward Island Park 0.1 mi
- 4: Turn LEFT onto RI-138/Boyd's Lane. Continue to follow Boyd's Lane. 0.6 mi
- 5: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto RI-114/MT Hope Bridge. Continue to follow RI-114N. 2.0 mi
- 6: Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto RI-114/Hope Street. 0.7 mi
- 7: Turn LEFT onto Church Street. <0.1 mi
- 8: Turn RIGHT onto Thames Street. <0.1 mi
- 9: Prudence Island Ferry is immediately on your LEFT.

Estimated Driving Time: 35 minutes (from start of RI-114)

From Providence

- 1: Travel east on I-195.
- 2: Merge onto MA-136 S via exit number 2 toward Warren R.I. /US-6 E/Newport R.I. 3.6 mi
- 3: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto RI-136/Metacom Ave. 3.7 mi
- 4: Turn RIGHT onto State Street. Continue to end of State Street. 1.0 mi
- 5: Turn LEFT onto Thames Street. 0.2 mi
- 6: Prudence Island Ferry will be on your RIGHT.

Estimated Driving Time: 35 minutes (from junction of I-195 E and I-95)

From Fall River

- 1: Travel south on RI-24 S toward Newport
- 2: Take the exit – exit number 2 – toward Bristol/MT Hope Bridge 0.1 mi
- 3: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto Boyd's Lane 0.5 mi
- 4: Go over the Mt Hope Bridge. Continue to follow RI-114 N. 2.0 mi
- 5: Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto RI-114/Hope Street 0.7 mi
- 6: Turn LEFT onto Church Street <0.1 mi
- 7: Turn RIGHT onto Thames Street <0.1 mi
- 8: Prudence Island Ferry is immediately on your LEFT

Estimated Driving Time: 25 minutes (from junction of 24 S and I-195)