

# The woodchuck chuck check: 700 lbs.

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EAST AVON, N.Y. - Richard Thomas says he is tired of being asked how much wood a woodchuck can chuck.

"They have to be trying to get one up on us well-versed biologists," said Thomas, a fish and wildlife technician for the state Department of Environmental Conservation. "I felt it was high time we replied."

So he decided to figure it out.

First, Thomas consulted the dictionary for a definition of "chuck," which he found to mean "to toss or discard." Woodchucks cannot chuck wood, but they do "toss or discard" dirt when they are digging a burrow.

Thomas then researched woodchucks and found that they weigh 5 to 10 pounds and have thick, strong legs, perfect for burrowing.

Thomas multiplied 35 square

feet, the typical size of a woodchuck burrow, by 20 pounds, the approximate weight of a square foot of soil, to come up with what he believes is the answer to one of the great unanswered questions.

How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

"Oh, about 700 pounds on a good day with the wind at his back," said Thomas. "I thought everybody knew that."



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