



# NEW JERSEY FIELD OFFICE FIELD NOTES

## MAY 2015



### **Alewife Monitoring at Wreck Pond Inlet** By Katie Conrad

Pre-restoration river herring monitoring for the Sandy-funded Restoring Wreck Pond Inlet Project is off to a good start. Several alewives, a species of river herring, were caught each morning during this monitoring cycle (May 1-May 5). Monitoring occurs in cycles scheduled around the new and full moons, which is when the most river herring migrate from the ocean to the headwaters of rivers to spawn. This project is in partnership with the American Littoral Society (ALS), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the Borough of Spring Lake. The goals of the project are to install a secondary pipe between the ocean and Wreck Pond that is designed to maximize fish passage; improve water quality; and decrease flooding risk in the surrounding communities. The data collected this year will be important to determine how the project will affect the river herring run within the watershed. Congressional District 4.



Project partners and volunteers looking at the day's catch. The fyke net is stretched across the river to catch all fish migrating upstream. Left to right: Tom Latza (ALS volunteer), Jenna Krug (ALS), and Katie Conrad (USFWS). Photo credit: Thomas Yip



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### Studying Interactions Between Red Knots and Oyster Aquaculture By Wendy Walsh

On May 5, the Service participated in field training for a Rutgers University research team studying interactions between red knots and oyster aquaculture in Delaware Bay. Led by Drs. Joanna Burger, Brooke Maslo, and Julie Lockwood, the Rutgers team is studying red knot habitat usage and foraging rates along a section of Cape May County's bayshore that includes several oyster farms. The study team is also recording the knots' reactions to various aquaculture activities such as sorting, power washing, and harvesting the oysters. Oyster farmers must tend their "crops" nearly every day during warm weather to prevent damage from biofouling organisms such as *Polydora* ("mud") worms. Data from the Rutgers study will help the Service, other agencies, and the oyster farmers develop conservation measures to minimize disturbance and other impacts to red knots from aquaculture activities.

Congressional District 2 – LoBiondo



Photo credit: Wendy Walsh, USFWS

Oyster "racks and bags" visible in the tidal flats behind the study team.



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### Partners Planting and Seeding in May By Brian Marsh

May is in the middle of the planting and seeding season when our Partners staff are helping landowners by providing technical and field assistance as well as seed, plants, and equipment to increase plant diversity at project sites and restore native cover. The following are some examples of this seeding and planting work that Partners is doing in the month of May:



On May 13, Partners provided and helped volunteers plant 850 bare root and 268 containerized trees and shrubs at the DuPont / Chemours Chambersworks Facility in Pennsville Township (Congressional District 2) in the Delaware Estuary Focus Area of the Partners program. Several small fields are being converted into young forest to benefit birds, such as prairie warbler, with the expectation that the fields will eventually become reforested and add to the site's attractiveness to forest interior birds such as wood thrush. The tree

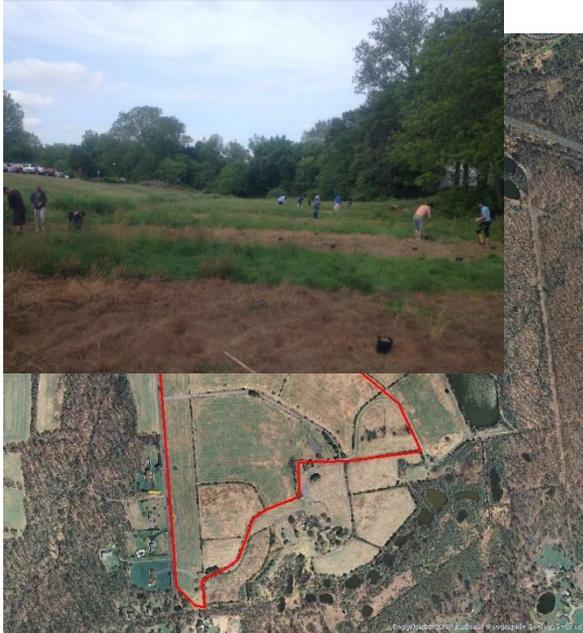


and shrub species planted, such as the pictured chestnut oak, are those that provided high forage value to wildlife. Other examples of species planted include spicebush, hackberry, black cherry, bayberry, and red cedar. Partners' ongoing partnership with New Jersey Audubon helped us find this project.



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On May 20, Partners helped six classes of students at the Woodstown High School in our Delaware Estuary Focus Area (Congressional District 2), plant material provided by Partners, including 500 bare-root and 85 containerized trees and shrubs, and 25 lbs. of wet meadow herbaceous seed mix. A local nursery also provided some additional containerized plants. The school is converting mowed turf grass into a Natural Discovery Area. Another 375 bare-root and live stake trees and shrubs were planted in March at this site through Partners. The ongoing partnership Partners has with the American Littoral Society and the Natural Lands Trust helped get this project started.

In early May, Partners provided 400 pounds of native warm-season grass seed to Hunterdon County for seeding 55 acres (outlined in red) at Hoffman Park in Union Township (Congressional District 7). This seeding complements other grassland seeding already done at the park. A local farmer used a no-till grass drill to do the seeding and will harvest parts of the field on a rotating basis after the grassland bird breeding season, to produce hay marketable to mushroom farmers. Over the years, Partners has done several projects with Hunterdon County Parks, particularly grasslands.



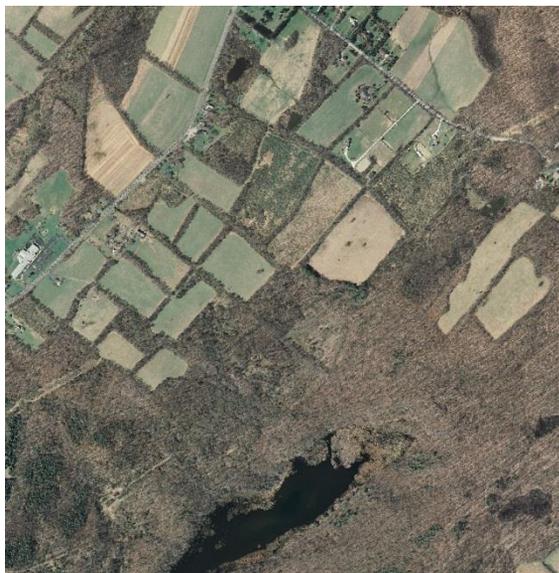
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On May 20, Partners provided 200 lbs. of native warm-season grass seed and 6 lbs. of wildflower seed for seeding 26 acres of a private property in Washington Township (Congressional District 7), to convert active agricultural field to warm-season grassland. Partners also provided the landowner 1,188 native trees and shrubs at the end of April for volunteers to plant elsewhere on his property. The property owner is a physician who wants to create an

organic CSA and model property for healthy living and conservation. Partners also provided the landowner several bluebird and kestrel boxes for the project.



In May, Partners delivered a boom sprayer and one of our no-till grass drills to The Nature Conservancy at their Johnsonburg Swamp Preserve, mostly in Green Township (Congressional District 5). They are working to manage early successional habitat in several fields at the north end of their preserve. The preserve, which lies in our Highlands / Middle Delaware River Focus Area, covers 714 acres and has one of the most diverse flora of any site in the State. Partners has three no-till grass drills that we provide to landowners for seeding native grasses and wildflowers. Due to the characteristics of the native seeds, normal landscaping or agricultural

seed drills will not work; therefore landowners mostly rely on Partners for access to these drills when they are creating or enhancing grassland and pollinator habitat.

Photo Credit: Brian Marsh, USFWS



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## Regional and HQ Staff Visits By Eric Schradling

On May 14, Wendi Weber RD visited the NJFO and participated in a press event to celebrate the completion of a NFWF Hurricane Sandy project at Stone Harbor, New Jersey. The project, led by New Jersey Audubon Society, enhanced approximately 4 acres of piping plover and shorebird habitat at Stone Harbor Point to reduce nest flood risk as well as predator management. Wendi also joined volunteers and American Littoral Society in banding red knots and other shorebirds at Fortescue Beach. The effort included catching two birds with geolocators on them which will provide valuable information on red knot movements.

On May 18, Paul Phifer ARD-ES visited NJFO along with several staff from FWS HQ to participate in red knot banding at Reeds Beach, New Jersey. Nanotags were added to red knots to collect additional movement data. The field visit also included visits to an aquaculture farm; a site visit to the Reeds Beach Hurricane Sandy project; and a nighttime horseshoe crab survey.



Congressional District 2

Photo Credit: Eric Schradling, USFWS