

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - News Release

Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Assabet River NWR · Great Meadows NWR · Mashpee NWR · Massasoit NWR · Monomoy NWR · Nantucket NWR · Nomans Land Island NWR · Oxbow NWR

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For more information: Libby Herland, Refuge Manager, 978/443-4661x11

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91 Acres Added to Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge *Federal Duck Stamp Dollars Conserving Land in Massachusetts*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has purchased more than 91 acres of land along the Assabet River in Stow, Massachusetts, according to Libby Herland, manager of the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The land, purchased from the Sudbury Valley Trustees, will be managed as part of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge.

The lands acquired border the Assabet River and include 13 marsh and swamp parcels from White Pond Road to Gleasondale. Some of the parcels front Track Road (which is part of the Assabet River Rail Trail) in Stow; others are accessible only from the river, according to Herland.

“These areas along the river teem with wildlife, and I am thrilled that they will be permanently protected as part of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. They are actually the first acres we’ve added to the refuge along the river. We deeply appreciate our conservation partnership with the Sudbury Valley Trustees and their patience in working with us for nearly three years to make this acquisition a reality,” said Herland.

Most of the parcels were donated to the Sudbury Valley Trustees by Hewlett Packard. The non-profit land trust also contacted other adjacent landowners and successfully secured an option on a 20-acre parcel that was purchased along with the former Hewlett Packard lands.

“One means by which Sudbury Valley Trustees fulfills its conservation mission is through working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – a partnership that dates back at least 50 years. It is fitting for this riverfront land to become part of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, and we are proud to have helped make that possible,” said Ron McAdow, executive director of the Trustees.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved the disbursement of \$125,000 from the federal Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase these lands in September

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2007. The primary source of revenue for the Fund comes from the sale of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, which all waterfowl hunters are required to purchase but which are also purchased by many non-hunters to protect wetlands and other habitat for migratory birds. This is the first use of “duck stamp money” to purchase lands at the Assabet River refuge. More than 2,200 acres was previously acquired in 2000 through a transfer to the Service from the U.S. Army.

“I thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Sudbury Valley Trustees for their work to make this acquisition a reality, and Hewlett Packard for their generosity in making the purchase possible,” said Barbara Volkle, president of the Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge.

“The purchase of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as ‘duck stamps,’ made this acquisition possible. The one billionth dollar from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund was recently used to purchase land for the National Wildlife Refuge System. When those of us interested in protecting land for wildlife buy duck stamps, we make a tremendous difference. Whether you visit a national wildlife refuge with your family for a nature walk, enjoy education programs, go birding, photograph wildlife and scenery, hike or snowshoe, or hunt and fish, your contributions make a tangible difference. It is wonderful to see these dollars at work in Massachusetts,” said Volkle.

Also expressing strong support for the purchase was Senator Edward M. Kennedy. According to Melissa Wagoner, spokeswoman for Senator Kennedy, “The Senator is extremely pleased that Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge has been able to acquire these additional acres and enhance the preservation of this Massachusetts treasure. The citizens of the Commonwealth will now be able to enjoy the beauty of these magnificent lands for years to come.”

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Sudbury Valley Trustees is a regional land trust that conserves land and protects wildlife habitat in the Concord, Assabet and Sudbury river basin for the benefit of present and future generations. For more information, visit www.svtweb.org.

The Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is a non-profit group established to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the refuge’s valuable resources for future generations of people and wildlife through education and stewardship. For more information about the Friends, see www.farnwr.org.